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In the memory of
Late Professor Denis Dutton
(February 1944 - December 2010)
Member, Editorial Board of *Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics,*
Editor of *Philosophy and literature,*
Founder editor of *Art and Letters Daily*.

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Spells of Trauma in Catherine Bush's *Minus Time*

JOHN MCKINNON

In her award-winning novel, *A Good House*, Bonnie Burnard manages to convey a sense of the rhythms and textures of domestic life in a tone that is intimate, even confidential. But she also offers some pointed, if passing, social commentary, particularly concerning modern liberal assumptions about perfectibility, the notion that, with only that much more information and ably tutored "skills," we could tame misfortune and ward off tragedy. Throughout the novel, assorted voices caution against the belief that others can save us, that rescue is possible, that turmoil can be irreversibly stilled and our conflicts painlessly resolved (19, 166, 216-17, 219). Such naïve faith in the power of institutions, experts, and our newly sensitized selves to elide difficulty and limit damage reflects the prevailing conviction that the possibility of harm looms everywhere and that our survival depends upon both a studied avoidance of risk and an eager acceptance of new controls. When the narrator remarks that in post-War Ontario, parents "did not want to load…kids up with the burden of possible but highly unlikely danger," and that "most of them disapproved of exaggeration generally," believing that "[n]othing good came from blowing things out of proportion," the contrast with our own anxious times could not be more starkly drawn (16, 19).

Every culture assumes the responsibility of teaching its young not just how to behave and what to believe, but what to beware. According to John Maxcy Zane, the belief among "primordial men" that every natural force and phenomenon constitutes a dark power that can only be appeased by supplication or sacrifice engendered a fear from which we have "never entirely recovered" (41). Indeed, adds Paul Zweig, it is easy to forget that human beings "have existed from age to age on the edge of social collapse and spiritual crisis," that civilized life "has often been experienced as a borderline condition in the process of getting worse," and that history "is, ultimately, the story of bad times" (viii). And yet, no one would claim that conceptions of harm and experiences of fear are uniform across every age and culture. We confidently, and quite naturally, note variations in temperament and obsession, either to characterize particular times and places, to draw distinctions among them, or to identify trends and watersheds, the first stirrings of what we eventually come to regard as instances of cultural advance or decline. As much as fear may prove an inescapable feature of human experience, then, it is bound over time to attach itself to different objects, or at least to broader or narrower ranges of objects, and to be experienced with varying degrees of intensity.[1]

Certainly, the complaints expressed in *A Good House* presume to identify a shift over the course of recent decades in attitudes toward harm, its sources and possibilities. In an effort to explain the emergence of what he calls our "culture of fear," Frank Furedi contrasts responses to the Aberfan disaster in South Wales in 1966 with more recent experiences, and interpretations, of adversity.[2] The current suspicion of stoicism, indeed the tendency to pathologize a wide range of emotional responses, together with the prevailing eagerness to extend the metaphor of stress "to virtually every social setting," illustrate profound changes over the past three or four decades in the norms we depend upon to assess "emotion, individual behavior and vulnerability."[3] Describing heightened perceptions of risk in the contemporary West as a "problem," Mary Douglas attributes their emergence, with curious precision, to significant cultural changes "since 1969" (3).

In his book, *Post-traumatic Culture*, Kirby Farrell addresses this contemporary "mood of cultural crisis," the oppressive sense "that something has gone terribly wrong in the modern world, something that we can neither assimilate nor put right" (ix-x). Although he grants that Western culture as a whole "is grounded in traumatic stories," this common inheritance can not account for emerging cultural contrasts, for those periodic irruptions of change and conflict that intensify feelings of daring or dread, vigor or lassitude, and that warrant our characterizing a particular age as confident, enterprising, and adventurous, say, or, alternatively, as sick, enervated, and anxious (44).[4] Our own culture, he says, exhibits with unnerving clarity the telltale post-traumatic symptoms of anxiety and estrangement, disenchantment and despair, skepticism and self-alienation (44). In ages such as ours, he says, "[m]ourning…reshape[s] the world," generating a new faith in the cultural hegemony of psychology as a profession and the psychological as a category, in institutional expertise generally, and in secular, and radically expansive, models of illness (104). But why us, Farrell wants to know, and why now?

Although the reigning obsession with harm and determination to avoid risk are issues on which Burnard offers passing commentary in *A Good House*, they constitute the most fundamental assumptions behind Catherine Bush's intriguing and highly original novel, *Minus Time*. Indeed, Bush's novel can be said to unfold against what Farrell calls "the white noise of background dread" (xiii). In such frantic and fragmented conditions, Bush wants to ask, what kind of human relationships are possible? How are we even able to imagine the future? In a number of striking ways, in fact, Farrell's *Post-traumatic Culture* and Bush's *Minus Time* count as complementary, even parallel, texts. This is particularly evident in their approach to two important claims: first, that trauma overwhelms not just the self, but what Farrell calls "the ground of the self"; and, second, that the experience of trauma can ultimately be put to different uses, that it presents us with widely divergent options. My aim in what follows is to consider the efforts both writers make to address these claims and to examine the ways in which the work of the one serves to confirm, illuminate, and amplify the insights of the other.

The Trauma of Transition

In the Victorian era, remarks G.K. Chesterton, "the old spirit of liberty" was overwhelmed by both progressive and reactionary forces, "barricaded by Bismarck with blood and iron," on the one hand, "and by Darwin [with] blood and bone," on the other. The "enormous depression" that infected many individuals at the time and the "curious cold air of emptiness" that gripped the culture itself were caused, he suggests, by this "coincident collapse" of both political and religious idealism. According to Chesterton, a condition of such profound disenchantment, pessimism and anxiety is "extremely unusual in the history of mankind" (66).[5] And yet, Farrell maintains that there are a number of distinct parallels between the psychological dislocation associated with the late-Victorian era and our own. In fact, he commits himself in *Post-traumatic Culture* to exploring the ways in which the concept of trauma has shaped dominant narratives in both periods.[6]

According to Farrell, modernism amounts to "a cumulative series of upheavals," which he conceives of as "spikes in a rising baseline of stress: markers for massive, disorienting storms of new information and technology" (27). Although he proceeds to identify a number of such instances over the course of recent centuries, juxtaposing the late-Victorian period with our own, he suggests, can provide a particularly "vivid, stereoscopic view of modernism" (4). Both can be described as cultures "dazzled and disoriented by change," principally due to technological advances that have radically altered social relations and destabilized conventional views of the self (23).[7] Even when the effects of these developments are not themselves catastrophic, they are symptomatic of a social upheaval that leaves people feeling unmoored, and their values, trust and sense of purpose undermined. Central to this response, in fact, is not just a disabling vertigo, but a powerful and pervasive skepticism.

The "perceived pandemonium" of both late-Victorian culture and the contemporary West is accompanied, Farrell maintains, by "paradigm shifts" that confront us with "baffling ambiguities," exposing our beliefs and principles as mere conventions and the world itself as "a tissue of interpretations," while alerting us to the endless possibility of deception (30, 33, 176, 44, xii). Under the weight of these contradictions, cultural models collapse, threatening social consensus and the stable transmission of values from one generation to another (51, 3). As cultural integrity erodes, and the world comes to feel "false and ungrounded," we are increasingly impressed by how vulnerable we are, and how ephemeral our existence (xii, 176). What Farrell calls "grim new injuries" proliferate, "death anxiety" intensifies, and survival emerges as an ideal far more alluring than those of either nurture or self-fulfillment (2, 12, 30). These "cumulative stresses," Farrell says, result in "the annihilation of meaning and identity," a preoccupation with decline and degeneration, and a growing belief that the world is slipping "threateningly out of control" (3, 18, 2).

In *Minus Time*, Bush dramatizes our efforts to confront these same disquietudes. The novel opens on the gravel shoulder of a Florida highway, where Helen Urie and her

brother, Paul, watch the launch of their mother's spacecraft. Barbara Urie is trying to become "the first Canadian mother in space" and, together with her American colleague, Peter Carter, to set a record for human space habitation. As the rockets rise from the platform, the air itself seems to crack open, flames burn "in a blinding dance," and the ground shudders beneath them (3). These images of speed, instability, and impending collapse dominate the novel. Helen recalls her father, David, explaining how, contrary to appearances, "the continents are always moving, very, very slowly under our feet" (23). A continental drift specialist, he had drawn a map for her as a child, showing her all the fault lines in North America, describing the occurrence of small earthquakes, even in the center of the continent where they lived. "Everywhere she had looked," Helen remembers of the hand-drawn map, "there were fault lines" (167). Later, David tells her how "researchers were no longer talking simply in terms of fault lines but fault segments, which responded differently to the buildup of stress: some crept, some lurched, some waited years then ruptured" (179).

Here, stress and the threat of chaos in our physical environment is intended to serve as a parallel for the fragility of the human psyche. Accordingly, as Barbara's spacecraft soars through the sky, Helen feels as if she has been "lifted off the ground, divided, pulled outside her body" (3). Standing before Paul's bathroom mirror, her outline trembles, "restless at the edges," a description that is at least as fitting for her frayed sense of self (36). Later, she confesses to feeling as if she had been knocked "off balance," and, elsewhere, "split in two" (187, 183).

This threat of fragmentation extends to the modern family as well. In the years leading up to her space flight, Barbara had had to spend extended periods of time in her Toronto laboratory, and later at the two national space headquarters in Houston and Montreal. Even more disruptive had been David's dramatic decision to abandon his career as seismologist and science writer to become a disaster-relief specialist. In the midst of Barbara's intensive preparations for her mission, and evidently feeling diminished by her momentous success, he leaves his young family to assist in the aftermath of the Los Angeles earthquake. Now, with Barbara hurtling toward space and Helen and Paul watching from the roadside, David sorts through the rubble of earthquake-devastated Mexico City, having been away from his wife and children for five years. According to Helen, she and Paul had grown up learning to live with the possibility that one parent or another would leave, since "marriages could always split up" (128, 148). She describes her family as specializing "in disappearing tricks," as "fissioning in all directions, spiraling through the air," and imagines the day when they would begin to reclaim their lost intimacy and start "hurtling through the thinning air toward each other" (8, 159, 253).

Helen is repeatedly assured that "contact is always possible," but where there is contact, there is also the possibility of conflict, of dissonance (159, 188).[8] Virtually every action and encounter in *Minus Time*, indeed every movement and touch, is described, one is tempted to say analyzed, in terms of its impact and reverberations.

Like planets, people exert a gravitational pull on one another. The air between them is "fragile," alive with energy, prickly with static (286). One person's glance grazes another, mere touch can bruise, while simple bodily movement changes the shape of the air (271, 70, 274). When David leaves, he is said to have "unpeeled" himself from his wife and children (159). Absent from her family, Barbara yet maintains a presence for them, a weight and bulk (277).

Of the Uries, David and Helen are the afflicted ones. They are cautious, skeptical, and, each confesses, unable at critical junctures of their lives to even think about or look toward the future (78, 175). For them, Barbara's presence is not just inescapable, but burdensome. Overwhelmed by her prodigious talent and indomitable will, unable to match her poise, tenacity and conviction, they each struggle for a renewed sense of identity and purpose. While Helen is perhaps most unnerved by her mother's perilous position in space, her father's intermittent reports from various scenes of devastation, and by her general awareness of the prospects for conflict in human affairs, her anxiety is both intensified and complicated by her particular efforts to free herself from her mother's orbit, to find her own identity, determine her own direction, and come to enjoy "some kind of independent life" (262).

The sources of Helen's anxiety, in fact, are almost limitless. The media's febrile and unstinting attention to various catastrophes heightens her distress. Their ravenous interest in her, as the daughter of an astronaut, and their cavalier attitude toward facts unsettle and anger her, but also contribute to her increasingly destabilized sense of self. In media reports about her, she says, her life "became infinitely malleable, as elastic as the limbs of a contortionist, stretching and bending in all directions" (115). Meanwhile, her growing commitment to the animal rights group, United Species, exposes her to the horrors of slaughterhouses and factory farming, as well as the perils of public protest. And yet, even the most basic elements of her urban existence are a source of disquiet. As Farrell observes, the very technologies that manage to tame "menacing forces" and increase efficiency can also "suffocate the spirit and make life's inevitable terrors more plainly unmanageable" (52). The enhancements we enjoy, that is, are secured at the expense of dizzying increases in what Mark Kingwell calls "the volume and velocity of everyday life," as well as the disruption of perspective, the steady erosion of belief, attention, and memory that they occasion (187).

In a halting effort to explain her agitation, Helen muses, "it's everything—the speed" (124). At a number of critical points in the novel, she realizes, "anything could happen" (2, 11, 187). Her decision to remain in Toronto while the rest of her family scatters is due, in part, she says, to a sense of responsibility, "a feeling that someone should stick around in case anything…happened" (72). She confesses to Barbara how much she worries about "all the terrible things that could happen" to her in space (250). And at a particularly tremulous moment, she asks, "where do we go from here?" and, elsewhere, "what now?" (160, 4).

Hers is a condition, then, not just of disorientation and estrangement, but of anxious anticipation, an interval in which her future appears held in abeyance, as if suspending her in time. Upset by an impromptu visit from her father, and by his hastened departure to tend to victims of a chemical fire in Ohio, Helen races off to Montreal to stay with Paul. Sitting in his kitchen, she sips wine, "still dazzled by the receding heat and the shock of arrival" (201). Later, she is advised about what space agency psychologists call "the trauma of return," those psychological struggles endured by astronauts in their efforts to readjust to life on Earth (289, 286). But if arrival and return are occasions for shock or trauma, so too is the transition between the two. In fact, the notion of minus time is intended to identify precisely such an interval, describing "those terrible, anticipatory moments" just before some life-altering shift or upheaval (283). Minus time, says the narrator, "could either be the beginning or the end," a period between rupture and recovery, where time itself feels "compressed and uncontrollable," and through which one moves "toward the moment of cumulative choice" (1, 123, 300). Minus time refers, then, to a passage in Helen's life, one that is occasioned by traumatic disruption and consumed by anxiety, imposing upon her a shift in perspective, a "whole new angle of vision," that, however bewildering, presents her with the possibility of some important, self-illuminating choice (3). Bush is particularly effective in conveying a sense of Helen's virtually uninterrupted feelings of disorientation and dread. Above all, however, she is determined to ask, what is at stake for individuals or cultures caught in the grip of such a condition? And, even more, what is to be done?

The Layers of Things

As in the late-Victorian era, so in the contemporary West, "all sorts of boundaries are shifting," says Farrell, "with predictable effects on people's sense of moral order, communal integrity, and family coherence" (213). In fact, he tends to characterize these convulsions less in terms of shifting boundaries and far more in terms of shifting, or crumbling, ground, which, he says, is "slipping and quaking all the time" (214). Among the most prominent characteristics of post-traumatic experience, he notes, is its tendency to destabilize "the ground of conventional reality" and to arouse, in turn, "death anxiety" (12, 3, 97). Elsewhere, he describes "the ground of personality" as consisting in "defenses against" this same affliction (8; also 176, 180, 196, 211, 243). That preserving the ground of both conventional reality, on the one hand, and individual personality, on the other, requires the forestalling of death anxiety may suggest some confusion on Farrell's part. Indeed, while on a number of occasions he refers to the ground of "the self," "identity," or "experience," elsewhere he associates it with "society," "civilization," "culture," "being," "existence," and "life," that is, with collective, or objective, as opposed to personal, or subjective, experience.[9]

This apparent confusion is traceable, I think, to Farrell's intending the phrase, "the ground of," sometimes in a causal, and at other times a constitutive, sense.[10] The "ground of the self," for instance, refers to the source of the self in culture, society, or civilization. Accordingly, the "ground of culture" simply identifies culture as constituting

that source, that which gives rise to and sustains the self. The ground that the self *requires*, in other words, is furnished by the ground that *is* culture. And yet, some of Farrell's remarks indicate that "the ground of culture" is intended in a causal sense as well, such that culture itself could be said to require some source that gives rise to and sustains it. If identity is grounded in culture, that is, so culture itself is grounded in certain "guarantees" (97).

While there are important conceptual distinctions to draw among these elements—the condition of the self, of the culture upon which the self depends, and of those guarantees upon which culture depends—their fortunes are intimately connected. For when the integrity of the "guarantees" is compromised, culture grows increasingly disordered, unable any longer to ground and sustain the self.[11] Thus, Farrell treats our concern to "substantiate" both the self and the ground of the self as virtually interchangeable, since to substantiate the one, we must substantiate the other (293, 329, 336). And, of course, to substantiate the ground of self, or culture, we must substantiate the guarantees, moral and metaphysical, that ground it. Any distinction between self and culture, then, is better understood as being drawn, not between two orders of experience at all, but rather between experience, on the one hand, and some sort of normative order, on the other.

Farrell's claim that "the self and its world disintegrate together" vindicates Bush's efforts throughout *Minus Time* to reflect Helen's inner agitations in external upheavals (293). These upheavals are occasioned not just by nature's random destructiveness, but by the excesses of human ambition, particularly as reflected in our technological prowess and our appetite for the benefits it promises. In this respect, Bush's decision to develop her narrative against the background of an instance of space flight is especially apt. Indeed, the capacity of revolutionary means of travel to inspire both wonder and fear has been widely remarked. "In the memoirs or diaries of the Victorians," writes Max Beerbohm, "you will find that the first journey by rail made [a] deep dint on sensibility" (399).[12] According to George Frederick Drinka, in fact, it was not just train travel, but the simple proximity of trains that heightened anxiety among Victorians (109, 120).[13] Eventually, symptoms were identified and new afflictions christened. And while this widespread fear diminished as train travel grew safer, much of it lingered, resurfacing, notes Drinka, "after a great train wreck." Thus, he concludes, "the magic and flair of the railway, mixing together wonderment and fright, smoke and fire, made it an image of impersonal power in an age of mechanized empire and its evil, neurosis" (112).

On Farrell's analysis, the image of the plane crash has displaced that of the train wreck as the most powerful means in contemporary culture of registering "the shock of radical historical change" and evoking "the traumatic potential of modernism" (2, 175). And yet, in the wake of the *Challenger* and *Columbia* shuttle disasters, the calamities of space travel provide a more powerful image still. In the novel, Helen's memories of the televised explosion of the fictional shuttle, *Victory*, prove particularly affecting, feeding her anxiety about her mother's space mission and, more generally, about the

modern world. It is this disabling anxiety that affords Bush the opportunity to address in a more current and vital context perennial concerns about the impact of technology and our reliance upon it.

When David refers to those "fault segments" that jostle beneath the Earth's surface, he not only hints at the possibility of eventual catastrophe, but also suggests that things are not what they seem.[14] This is a matter that Bush pursues with notable persistence throughout the novel. Helen recalls, for instance, how her mother would describe to her and Paul how an ordinary rock from Minnow Lake "contained particles that had been in existence since the beginning of time," and how the jittery static of the family TV set could well be "traces of energy traveling across space from the earliest days of the universe. What you saw," in other words, "was not always what it seemed" (27-28). In the same way, "the stars we see are really old, traveling light," Barbara says. "The stars are always moving. They are not what they seem" (69-70).

Through all of Helen's struggles, what remains "the constant," for her, "the point of origin" of her encounter with minus time, is Barbara's decision to become an astronaut (174). And yet, she is repeatedly impressed by how the upheaval that attends such a decision can coincide with the persistence of the ordinary. "How could you anticipate any of this," she asks, "the sameness and the chasm from the moment before?" (82). The fact of her mother's having become an astronaut, however momentous, "slipped seamlessly over her," Helen observes, such that Barbara could stand before her family "exactly as she had been the moment before" (107). In the wake of some life-altering choice or event, Helen asks, "did houses suddenly look different…? Did people? Did they look less substantial, did they start to disappear?" (114). She recalls how, on the day of the *Victory* tragedy, the family home "looked just as it had when we'd left it that morning," as if she had expected some more dramatic rent in the fabric of ordinary life (237). David reports how he had been attacked by a man whom he had to keep from returning to his home after the Los Angeles earthquake. Even though the foundation of the house had been shattered, he recalls, the man had protested, *"It looks exactly the same"* (179).[15] And while David himself had the capacity to "leave a trail of disasters behind him," it is with distinct surprise that Helen notes, following his visit to her Toronto apartment, that "[t]he room, the blue sofa, the TV set didn't move" (183).

Like Barbara's instruction to her children at Minnow Lake, all of these passages involve "stories about the layers of things" (27). In refining this important image, Bush invokes geological phenomena, as is apparent in David's "endless talk of earthquakes" and Barbara's interest in rock composition and glacial formation, but draws too upon our growing reliance on technological networks, referring, for instance, to the "layers of pipes and cables" that run beneath Helen's feet, "the whole precarious, invisible web that held each building, each house suspended in air" (93, 27-28, 222).[16] What most interests her, however, is the parallel that immediately suggests itself between such complex systems and the human subject. For in the latter case, too, we are inclined to speak of surface features and deeper dimensions that, together, constitute a fragile whole.[17]

If, in the physical world, then, subterranean menace lurks beneath stable surfaces, and if our trust in technology is tempered by an anxiety about the increasing range of experience that falls outside of our control, so the surface coherence of the self conceals unanticipated layers of complexity. Here, the image of layers assumes, for Bush, a fundamentally epistemological significance. For instance, layers separate people, "like a screen, like an extra skin," preventing us from knowing one another (264; also 140). Their existence prompts questions that can only be avoided if we "press down" new experiences upon them, suppressing them and whatever challenges or insights they might provide (125, 139). Surfaces deceive: what outwardly appears safe in fact poses danger, while what appears to cause harm offers solace; seemingly unruffled conduct disguises panic; a majestic launch, considered from a different perspective, is a dangerous explosion; a daring adventure is at once an escape; what bleeds, eliciting disgust, promises nourishment; an increase in distance enhances intimacy (187; 30-31; 72; 238-39; 247; 246, 249, 32, 251).

Since every perception and proposition has a "flip side," our encounters with hidden layers do not so much afford a deeper understanding as confront us with contradictions, which, Helen agonizes, are "everywhere" (247, 251). Indeed, the sheer multiplicity of layers suggests that truth is an illusion, that there are claims that one can both affirm and deny, and that all we have left are our fitful interpretations (262). Unsurprisingly, then, the world comes to feel "thin and porous" to Helen, everything awash in "sudden relativity" (123, 251). Her fragmented experience of the world confirms, as Farrell suggests it must, a like fragmentation of herself. In order further to convey the ruptures and discontinuities in Helen's self-perception, Bush resorts frequently to the image of the double, particularly in the form of reflections, simulations, and replicas. For her, like Farrell, the proliferation of meanings, perspectives, and identities not only registers the tensions that destabilize, but also affords the means of ultimately "corroborating," the self and its world (134, 136). But how is Helen to manage this?

Farrell claims that self and world disintegrate together because "identity is a prosthetic construction" (293). Here, "prosthetic" is intended to emphasize that, not just tools, but relationships, can "make up for our creaturely limitations" (175). Since other people "can extend our wills as tools do," after all, our relationships with them, no less than with instruments, enable us to expand and deepen our engagement with the world (175, 179). Disruption of these connections not only heightens anxiety, but erodes trust, diminishing our confidence in what we take ourselves to value. Accordingly, the otherwise grand and sweeping claim that self-recovery requires recovery of the world amounts simply to the suggestion that these disrupted prosthetic networks be restored, which itself requires the restoring of our trust in the world and in others. And if the disruption in question is more a sundering, such that restoration is impossible, then new sources of trust and value must be found.

Trauma and Its Uses

To confront the "damaged ground of life" is to feel one's own self "queasily

ungrounded," laboring under what Farrell calls "the spell of trauma" (99, 71, 271). And yet, this experience of shock and displacement, together with the attendant loss of certainty and sense of mourning, can be construed, or used, in different ways. Trauma can occasion lasting injury, inflict "numbness and derangement," and encourage "a sense of doom," to be sure, but it can also offer up a "purifying ideal," facilitate "deeper insight and integration," and promise "a way back to life" (217, 20, 79). The determination of the traumatized personality to avoid the former set of afflictions is exemplified in his efforts to devise for himself "convincing grounds for identity" (179). Indeed, the post-traumatic effort to recover the self and its cultural ground is a "creative act," says Farrell, a "moral negotiation" (184, 187). As such, however, it is also a deeply ideological activity, which can be manipulated, reinforced, or exploited (184, 234, 7). And this suggests that the latitude for creativity and negotiation is not without limit, for certain strategies are less "healthy" than others, more "problematic," even "weakly grounded, if not untenable" (231, 357, 211). They can represent an evasion of responsibility, contribute to "psychic ruin," or establish tyrannical or sadistic relationships (231, 7, 282, 243). Mastery of trauma, meanwhile, consolidates relationships that are supportive, perhaps "symbiotic," fortifying the self, renewing its trust in, and enabling it to negotiate "reentry" into, the world (187). But what accounts for such mastery? What makes certain grounds for identity "convincing," and the devising of them particularly artful?

If Farrell's *Post-traumatic Culture* can be said to document the alternating rhythms of fragmentation and coalescence, the contest between centrifugal and centripetal forces in modern life, Bush's *Minus Time* dramatizes and projects them. Objects, faces, families and psyches break up and fly apart, but eventually solidify, slip into focus, sharpening their outlines. For Bush, emergence from the convulsions of minus time is reflected in a growing sense of self-possession and commitment, which in turn requires, as Farrell suggests, a choice among options. In the novel, the most obvious such option appears to be that between optimism and pessimism, affirmation and skepticism, between the radiant triumphalism of modernity and the bleak disenchantment of its critics. But as Barbara herself protests, "[w]hy does it always have to be one way or the other?" (249). Advertising the premiere of *Frontiers*, the science show from space, she asks her audience to imagine the Earth as a basketball, and then to imagine sticking a piece of Scotch tape on it, in order to demonstrate how thin and fragile that layer of atmosphere is that sustains us, and to urge a greater care for it and our planet (91-92). And in a stirring scene near the end of the novel, when two crowds converge along the shores of Lake Ontario, one cheering on Barbara, encouraging her to stay in space, the other campaigning for the diversion of funds from space travel to environmental protection, they are presented as virtually mirroring one another, commanding not just our sympathy, but, in some measure, each other's (303).

In fact, the prospect of reconciling, of finding some balance between, otherwise contradictory propositions or world-views, is one of Bush's central concerns. For Helen, the most noteworthy of Paul's architecture classes is his course in statics, "the science of how buildings stand up and why" (38). Barbara's own scholarly research

involves a motion-sickness machine designed to test the relationship between the nervous and vestibular systems that enables people to find and maintain their balance (13, 24, 110). These respective academic interests reflect a shared psychological propensity, for just as Paul is said to will by acts of concentrated stillness that things not fall apart, so Barbara is determined to "confound contradictions" by balancing "several worlds inside her head at once" (36, 144, 300, 41). By contrast, Helen confesses to not knowing "what to do about the contradictions," a confusion that leaves her struggling "tippily" to strike some balance "between different parts of her life" (262, 146, 169).

In a scene that proves unexpectedly instructive, Helen remembers drifting in a rowboat on Minnow Lake as a child, under a sky full of stars. "I held onto the side of the boat and looked around dizzily," she recalls, "searching for our cottage, some horizon, but all the yellow lights along the shore, even the line between the sky and earth, had disappeared" (59). Looking outward, and upward, she is unable to orient herself, and over the course of the novel comes to conclude that she will never find her bearings by looking anywhere but within. While it is true that Barbara regards the stars as a source of safety and guidance, "a reflection of home," Helen conceives home, in turn, as "portable," no static location, but "something she could carry with her, inside her…" (184, 277-78).

If substantiation of the self hinges on a choice between options, then, that choice ought not to aim at what is external to us, whether in the form of some settled plan or a formula that we can use to calculate a comfortable mid-point between opposing positions. Concerning both of these proposals, Aristotle's remarks in the *Nicomachean Ethics* are especially helpful. According to Aristotle, the superior individual must pursue an end that is self-sufficient and subordinate to no other. He identifies this end with *eudaimonia*, a state of character achieved by one who has lived a happy, well-rounded life. And yet, one can hardly be said to "choose" it (III.2.1111b 27-32). Instead, we "lay down" or "wish for" that end, committing ourselves to it, but deliberating about and choosing only what promotes it (III.3.1112a 16-17; 111.5.1114b 24-25; III.2.1111b 27-28; III.4.1113a 15; III.5.1113b 4-5). How this end appears to a particular person may depend, in part, on her (III.5.1114b 17-18). She can never be sure that the cumulative effect of her choices will secure that end or, for that matter, how stable the end itself will remain (III.5.1115a 2-4). No doubt, her conception of what it amounts to is progressively refined as she approaches it. Accordingly, no plan for success can be prescribed in advance of the particular choices she will have to make.

And yet, her efforts to achieve *eudaimonia* are by no means aimless, since she is guided by what Aristotle calls "the mean," that intermediate course between excess and deficiency. Many are quick to ridicule this doctrine, interpreting it as urging a life of cautious calculation, while wryly countering that moderation is all very well, if only in moderation.[18] But while acting in accordance with the mean is a formal ethical requirement that applies to all, says Aristotle, what counts as the mean in a particular

situation "is not the same for everyone" (II.6.1106a 30-34). So sensitive must our application of the mean be to the particularities of a given case that acting well can be said to be a matter of responding "at the right times, about the right things, toward the right people, for the right end, and in the right way" (II.6.1106b 21-24). Indeed, it is precisely because the mean furnishes no quantitative test or rough-and-ready formula that it is "hard work," according to Aristotle, to live well (II.9.1109a 24-25).[19]

Our task, then, is far less a matter of crafting a settled identity than of learning how to master contingency. Bearing in mind Adam Phillips's useful distinction, we must approach the future not impelled by destiny or design, but equipped with a "repertoire," or as Farrell prefers, an "adaptive flexibility" that will enable us to navigate our way in the midst of uncertainty (Phillips, 59; Farrell, 357). Earlier, I described the relation between the self and its ground as that between experience and some normative order. It is important, however, to resist identifying that order with any fixed principle or set of principles. Rather, it is more like a source of motivation, no mere impulse, certainly, but an imperative that channels our free judgment, what we might call directedness without a set of directions. When Paul insists that we need a "vision," one "that isn't like anybody else's," he has something very much like this in mind (203). To know one's own mind, in fact, is to enjoy a clarity of perception and command of one's enthusiasms that lend free choice the force and feel of necessity (207). Moved by her brother's independence and spirit of invention, Helen is soon able to grant this same insight (221).

It occurs to Helen that it is not change as such that disturbs her, but rather her passivity in the face of it. She must learn, she says, "to change things herself" (47). That "constant low-grade fear of catastrophe" which surges up in her through much of the novel and the "interior vigilance" she has to muster to contend with it eventually give way to wonder, the sort of care about the world that one associates with curiosity rather than control (181, 158, 259, 302-03).[20] She acquires a vision sufficiently complex that it is no longer defeated by ambiguity and before which "everything seems magnified," as opposed to fragmented and diminished (303). Whereas she initially declares it impossible for her to think about the future, she later insists to her mother that she is "trying to have some sense" of it, and ultimately describes herself as being "saturated with it" (78, 249, 220).

To suggest with Burnard and Furedi that our response to difficulty, our heightened sense of our own vulnerability, and our reigning, and always mutating, anxieties, are exaggerations is to suggest that they are not just unwarranted, but somehow hysterical. And as Elaine Showalter remarks, while literature can certainly contribute to the spreading of hysteria, it can also help us understand it (99). For Farrell, too, fiction and film can serve as "radar sweeps of the social atmosphere, sensitive to patches of turbulence and the movements of large air masses." While their predictive powers are minimal, he adds, "they may usefully locate unsettled imaginative conditions and identify their paths of development" (26). Indeed, his book includes a number of detailed

analyses of literary and cinematic works that illustrate the surprising uses of trauma in periods of cultural upheaval. While my declared aim has been to establish *Post-traumatic Culture* and *Minus Time* as complementary texts, I want to maintain, too, that Bush's novel is an exemplary instance of the sort of sensitive, insightful work that Farrell has in mind, that rare work of fiction which is able deftly to get the measure of its time, not merely to mimic and perpetuate, but to encourage our understanding of, its energies and obsessions.

Notes and References

[1] For instance, Hobbes argues that while there is a "similitude of *Passions*," including fear, "which are the same in all men," there is no such similitude "of *the objects* of the Passions," which vary according to an individual 's personality, his particular education, and, we might add, the temper of his time (82-83).

[2] . In the disaster, 144 were killed, 116 of whom were children, when a colliery spoil-tip collapsed.

[3] Furedi, "The Silent Ascendancy of Therapeutic Culture in Britain" (16, 17). See also Furedi's *Culture of Fear*. According to Micale, any history of our time must "seek to explain the astounding cultural resonance of the idea of psychological trauma today in one area of human endeavour after another " (7).

[4] In a suggestively related passage, Trilling observes, "sometimes the hygiene of the soul is thought to be best served by spaces and objects whose magnitude overawes and quiets the will, or, alternatively, challenges it to heroic assertion…" (210-11).

[5] Just as Chesterton discerned a "cold air of emptiness" in the Victorian era, so Young refers to the prevailing "chill in the air," and to economic and social developments so rapid and extensive as to constitute "a climatic change" (121, 21).

[6] In Shields's *The Stone Diaries*, a novel that bears comparison with Burnard's *A Good House*, the great-niece of the main character, Daisy Goodwill, is described in such a way as to suggest that she is sensitive to "the contemporary plagues of displacement and disaffection" and making an effort, in turn, "to keep the bad dreams of modern life out" (265-66). The great-niece is named Victoria.

[7] . Lowenthal challenges "the common belief that technical invention has soared without precedent in recent decades" and accounts, in turn, for widespread social anxiety. On the contrary, Lowenthal maintains, our ancestors "suffered change more violent than ours, but we *perceive* ourselves to be its unexampled victims" (8). Here, Lowenthal hints at the conce rn that preoccupies Furedi (n. 3, above): what accounts for this perception of unsurpassed vulnerability?

[8] "Conflict," writes Bambrough, "is a mode of contact" (39)[9] See xii, 83, 91, 114, 177, 181, 202, 211, 293, 357 (the ground of the self); 39, 60, 179, 222, 232 (the ground of identity); 18, 22, 76, 85, 97, 108, 135, 143, 176, 178, 195 (the ground of experience); 97, 206 (the ground of society); 39 (the ground of civilization); 206 (the ground of culture); 183, 184 (the ground of being); 13 (the ground of existence); and 99 (the ground of life)

[10] . For a comparable distinction between causal and constitutive senses of, in this case, artistic intention, see Zangwill (33).

[11] Kingwell endorses Farrell's view, remarking that "cultures begin to lose their integrity at just the same time individuals do" (186).

[12] Beerbohm himself was obsessed more with the risks of automobile travel, recalling how the air rushed into his lungs "with utmost violence" as he sped along the roadway, adding that, for some, the Mercedes was "a glorious revelation, an apocalypse" (397). [13] See also Showalter (66, 110-11, 120).

[14] The rhetoric of concealment, of course, suggests further sources of fear. For more on this, see Furedi, *Culture of Fear* (29, 34, 39, 62, 113, 130, 166); Dowbiggin (6, 14, 44, 68, 104, 132); and, as the issue bears on the more specialized field of legal reform, Farber and Sherry (123, 134-37).

[15] Compare Trow's surmise that, at some point in the post-WWII period in the United States, "there happened under us a Tectonic Plate shift." While "the buildings are the same," he writes, "we are not the same nation that had these things before" (12-13).

[16] For Sennett, the image of a network, as opposed to that of a hierarchy, is itself revealing, since, precisely to the extent that it is "flatter and more flexible," a network is readily subject to redefinition, even decomposition, and, as such, unstable. See his *The Corrosion of Character* (23, 48). For observations on what he calls "the 'network' mistake" and its implications for the integrity of individual elements, see Fish (100-01).

[17] Thus, Erikson refers to "the deeper strata of the human mind" (66). See also Bellow's *The Dean's December*, where the narrator identifies Miss Porson's "permanent" self with her "deeper strata" (144), and Amis's *The Information*,where the narrator allows that even these levels can undergo a "gravitational collapse," resu lting in a loss of identity (158).

[18] See Tanner (313). For a similar misreading, see Weaver (119).

[19] According to Nussbaum, the Aristotelian conception, in advocating the priority of the particular over the general, requires experience of the concrete. "This active task," she writes, "is not a technique; one learns it by guidance rather than by formula" (44).

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Eurocentric Commentary and the Gupta Period

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Important work from the Gupta period in India is examined with an eye toward the Eurocentric slant of much extant commentary. It is argued that notions such as the development of a "Renaissance" fail to do justice to the motivating factors behind the work. Work by Rowland and Kramrisch is cited, and the Buddha statuary of the Gupta era is subjected to particular analysis.

Most of the available criticism on the art of India focuses on the Gupta period as a high point in Indian art. The various known sculptures of the Buddha and similar figures become, themselves, exemplars of a tradition, and the work of the Gupta period is frequently contrasted with other styles that are thought to be more derivative, such as the Gandhara.[1] Among commentators whose work on India is at all well-known, this era stands out, especially for the formality of line of its many Buddha sculptures, some of which have become among the most renowned pieces of the art of India available in museums around the world.

But what is remarkable about a great deal of the tradition of the art of India, and what continues even in a contemporaneous vein, is an attempt to try to articulate the various styles of regions and time periods in terms of Western art history. We are often told, for example, that the Mughal miniatures bear comparison with Mannerist pieces; in commentary on the Gandhara school, even though it is clear that Western influence is to be found, it is the Western, or Greek influence that predominates in criticism.[2] It will be the argument of this paper that, more so perhaps than a number of other styles associated with South Asia, Gupta art has been subjected to an overabundance of Eurocentric commentary. The emphasis on clarity of line and stylistic features more typical of High Renaissance statuary prevents us from seeing key features of the work, and reinforces the notion—all too common in criticism of the art work of developing nations—that the given cultural style has not reached a high point of development unless it can favorably be compared to European work.

I

The notion of a tradition—and the concomitant notion of its reaching some sort of apex—would not be so important were it not the case that art commentary tends to focus on this construct across cultures. If the Gupta period may be thought of as the high point of Indian art, it is crucial to try to demarcate the trajectory that does, indeed, lead up to it. Rowland notes, for example, that:

> [T]he steatite seals [at the site of Mohenjo-Daro] reveal the most consummate and delicate perfection of craftsmanship…. The seals provide…evidence for our reconstruction of the Mohenjo-Daro religion and its relationship with the ancient Near East and the concepts of modern Hinduism.[3]

This tradition, which might be thought (on some construals) to begin at Mohenjo-Daro, passes through a number of alterations—including early stupa configurations, and so forth—and reaches a climax with the Gupta, according to the official tale. But if there is already an inherent Eurocentrism in the notion of a "tradition," that centering must be regarded as increasing exponentially when it is noted that the very features of the Gupta period work that yield the notion of classicism are themselves features that are built around tropes and takes on European art that were developed during the growth of European art criticism of the twentieth century.

Although a wide variety of pieces of sculpture, architecture and temple construction demarcate the Gupta style, it is probably best known in the West for the development of a sort of Buddha-statuary that is itself often regarded as the culmination of artistic representations of the Buddha. Gone are some of the Greco-Roman influences of the Gandhara style; characteristic of the stylization of the Gupta period is a stark simplicity. Rowland writes, of the Mathura Buddha:

> In the Mathura Buddhas the rather hard conventionalization of the late Gandhara drapery formula has been reworked into a rhythmic pattern quite apart from its descriptive function; that is, the repetition of the loops of the string-like drapery provides a kind of relief to the static columnar mass of the body…. The conception of the actual form of the Buddha is entirely Indian…. Together with the commanding height of the figures, [this quality] conveys a feeling of awesome dignity and power.[4]

Categorizing Gupta work as defined by a "mastery in execution" and the development of "Late Antique convention," the commentary developed in this hallmark text on the art of South Asia seems to see Indian art as moving on a parallel track to that of the European pre-Renaissance and Renaissance work. Both, according to the tale, begin with a sort of crude prototype, and both move through various stages before achieving a mastery of line and simplicity of style. But part of the difficulty is that it is manifestly obvious that Indian work is non-representational in the European sense; whatever it is that the Indian artist is after (if we may term the craftsman an "artist"), representational art is probably not part of the goal. Rather, a heightened sense of the

importance of myth pervades the culture, and in that sense whatever is achieved in the stonework speaks to different origins.

II

The importance of line and form in European commentary on the art of India (and, indeed, on the art work of many regions around the world) is directly traceable, at least in part, to the work of Clive Bell and other such thinkers. During the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the commentary on much of the work of India seemed to focus on its spectacular size and supposedly erotic themes. Both Khajuraho and Konarak, for example, were singled out by the British at an early point for these very sorts of reasons. (As Rowland says of Khajuraho, the "celestial maidens possess a great vitality expressed in their tortuous movements…the roundness and the softness of the breasts and belly are emphasized….")[5] But the emphasis on line and proportion that seems to signal to the critic that the Gupta period is a "Golden Age" can only properly get off the ground when it has been decided that line is of paramount importance in the realm of aesthetic appreciation.

Clive Bell, in his well-known Art, has the following to say about what might demarcate the aesthetically crucial:

> What, then, is the conclusion of the whole matter? No more than this, I think. The contemplation of pure form leads to a state of extraordinary exaltation and complete detachment from the concerns of life: of so much, speaking for myself, I am sure. It is tempting to suppose that the emotion which exalts has been transmitted through the forms….If this be so, the transmitted emotion, whatever it may be, must be of such a kind that it can be expressed in any sort of form—in pictures, sculptures, buildings, pots, textiles, &c., &c.[6]

Now it begins to be a great deal more clear why the Gupta period is considered to be the high point of much of the art of India. The very "loops of the string-like drapery" and "columnar mass" of the body of the Buddha in the Mathura piece speak overwhelmingly to form; in addition, if one were inclined to think the work of the Gandhara period too derivative (and it has frequently been so labeled), the same cannot be said of the Gupta work, since much of the Greco-Roman influence is completely absent. As Bell remarks, we can consider the Gupta Buddhas and other such pieces to involve the "contemplation of pure form"—here the form is of such overwhelming importance that there is a very real and genuine sense in which it does not matter whether the figure in question is of the Buddha or some Hindu deity or even something else. Representation for a moment takes a back seat to this notion, and in so doing, other Eurocentric concerns get the upper hand. One could almost make the argument that the British needed something like the Gupta period to be able to make the sorts of claims about the work of

South Asia that they would have liked to make.

Benjamin Rowland notes, of a statue of a Bodhisattva from this epoch, that "[t]he radiant face, softly modelled in gently fusing abstract planes, has that air of half-sensuous, half-spiritual introspection…."[7]

If one were to go about the business of examining the art of India from the standpoint of some work in the Hindu canon, however, one might find a different set of concerns brought to the fore. Kathleen Higgins, in a recent article on *rasa* and its application to general aesthetic matters, notes:

> The Indian tradition analyzes the psychology of aesthetic breakthroughs and situates them in the broader context of human aspirations…. Indian investigation of breakthroughs both within and beyond aesthetics challenges Western philosophy….[8]

In other words, if rasa is related to some conception of aesthetic enjoyment, as Higgins claims, it provides a completely different way of examining art, above and beyond the notion of aesthetic distancing (to which analysis of form is, obviously, closely linked). This in itself might be very helpful for the scrutinizing of art work and even craft from a number of traditions but, oddly—or not so oddly—it does not describe the way in which the artwork of the Gupta period has generally been examined in the European artworld.

In any case, one thing that may be said about the Gupta work most frequently subjected to examination (such as the various Buddhas) is that they do, indeed, exhibit a concern for purity of line. But even without advertence to the notion of rasa, one might want to make the claim that a better explanation for the concern with line has to do with elements of the mythography of the Indian tradition itself.

It may prove helpful, in establishing our thesis about work of the Gupta period, to compare it with the now fairly well-known Gandhara work. Gandhara sculpture is significantly different from most of what a Westerner is likely to think of as "Indian." This particular work owes its provenance to the first through fifth century period in what is today Afghanistan, Pakistan and India—because a number of individuals affiliated with the Roman empire were present in the region during that period, stonework began to exhibit traits of the then regnant Greco-Roman style. A number of portrayals of the Buddha are prominent among the pieces of that period, and they are about as far removed from the Gupta work as one could possibly imagine; the Gandhara work shows hair and facial elements that are decidedly from an area outside of South Asia.

One might naively think that such work would be of more interest to European scholars; after all, it shows influence from what will later become Europe. But the syncretism of the Gandhara school is widely viewed as a corruption—what makes the Gupta work so enticing is that it is "pure," and yet by the same token, as we have seen, the standards for that purity invoke quintessentially Eurocentric constructs. The final

irony might be thought to revolve around the fact that work that actually is European, at least to some extent, is held in lesser regard than work that—by European standards—represents an uncontaminated Indian take on Indian themes. But, as has been argued here, the clear line and "abstract planes" of the Gupta work show that the notion of a cultural trajectory culminating in a certain phase is very much in play in any analysis of the Gupta period.

III

In his analysis of the importance of Gupta work, Rowland begins his chapter with the following summative statement:

> Although often referred to as the Indian Renaissance, the Gupta period is not properly speaking a rebirth, except in the political sense as a reappearance of a unified rule…. Seldom in the history of peoples do we find a period in which the national genius is so fully and typically expressed in all the arts as in Gupta India. Here was florescence and fulfillment after a long period of gradual development, a like sophistication and complete assurance in expression in music, literature, the drama and the plastic arts. The Gupta period may well be described as 'classic'…[9]

It is not only the advertence to the notion of a "Renaissance" that helps us to focus on the particularly European scope of Rowland's analysis, but the very sense of a "fulfillment" after a period of "gradual development." Because of the varying history and status of peoples within the South Asian region, it is much more difficult to make out any of these notions than it would be in a demarcated area of Europe, for instance France. In the latter case, where we can make the claim that a gradual development persisted among a group of ethnically related peoples over the course of a thousand years, it is not off the mark to try to speak of a culmination or fulfillment.

But the tensions between the Dravidian areas and the Aryan invasion alone make it difficult to try to form a notion of a coherent picture of India, and in the arts this becomes a greater problem. It is tempting for the European critic to think in terms of important constructs of the Western tradition, such as representation, clean design, and balance of color and line. But there is little reason to believe that any of these European art desiderata had much influence in the area that is today India, or that they would have been valued by those who are now called "Indians." Rather, it is clear that what is of overwhelming importance in the art of South Asia is a mythographic worldview, portions of which can be deemed to be representational only insofar as they might depict an idealized version of a god or demiurge. Some of what is at stake has little to do with representation in anything like the traditional sense—that is why early European visitors were so alarmed by what appeared to them to be multiple-armed deities. For example, anything having to do with Shiva has a great deal more to do with an attempt

to convey the power of Shiva than with standard representation. Stella Kramrisch, in her well-known *The Presence of Shiva,* writes:

> Siva should be thought of in a fourfold manner, and perceived as the cause of existence, existence itself, the cause of liberation, and release. As the cause of existence, Siva had prepared the seed of existence for the Lord of Generation, and was born as existence from the Lord of Generation…. Siva was a yogi holding within himself the power of life, the power of creativity.[10]

We might think that this excision better conveys some of what is at stake in the numerous dancing Shivas (admittedly not part of the Gupta tradition) often found in Western museums. Since Shiva is completely a mythological construction, any elements of representation are attenuated at best.

Although it might not seem relevant, Rhoda Kellogg, in her influential analysis of children's artwork around the globe, notes that "Many theories about art are based on ounces of experience, and some theories seem to me to be based on virtually no experience. Words in these theories are used to obscure perceptions rather than to present verifiable ideas."[11] It would not be accurate to say that commentary on the Gupta period is based on no experience, but the "obscuring" of perception of which Kellogg writes in a different context occurs in the classical commentary on Gupta work (and other work of India) at least partially because the visual experiences of approaching the work have been interpreted almost entirely from a European point of view. Even when commentators were familiar with some of the classical commentary of the Hindu tradition, it did not seem to dampen their enthusiasm for thinking in terms of moves from Giotto to Raphael to Parmigianino, when there is little in the work of any portion of the Indian tradition that would give the observer the notion that a comparatively straight line trajectory is involved in the continuum represented by the work.

There is no question that a great deal of the Gupta statuary found in museums represents an achievement of line that stands out, and there is also no argument to be given against the notion that the work is, at bottom, a product of forces on the subcontinent, unlike some of the other work that might be subject to analysis. But the driving spirit behind the work has a great deal more to do with notions of generation, power and creativity (as Kramrisch has noted) than with form and balance in the Western sense. To appreciate the art of India, we must begin to enter into the spirit in which it was created. This, unfortunately, some commentators have failed to do.

Notes and References

1. Perhaps the best example of art historical commentary on the work of South Asia remains Benjamin Rowland's *The Art and Architecture of India*, Baltimore: Penguin Books Ltd., 1967.

[2]. The Mughal miniature "The Hour of Cowdust" is compared by Rowland to a number of works of the Renaissance, despite the fact that the figures are clearly not representationl in the same sense. (Rowland, *Art,* pp. 210-211.)

[3]. Rowland, *Art*, p. 16.

[4]. *Ibid.*, p. 139.

[5]. *Ibid.*, p. 177.

[6]. Clive Bell, *Art*, New York: Frederick A. Stokes & Co., 1913, pp. 68-9.

[7]. Rowland, *Art,* p. 142.

[8]. Kathleen Higgins, "An Alchemy of Emotion: *Rasa* and Aesthetic Breakthroughs,"in *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 65, No. 1, Summer 2007, pp. 43-54. This citation p. 43.

[9]. Rowland, *Art,* pp. 129-130.

[10]. Stella Kramrisch, *The Presence of Shiva,* Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981, p. 457.

[11]. Rhoda Kellogg, *Analyzing Children's Art,* Palo Alto: National Press Books, 1970, p. 226.

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The portrayal of Silence in Amitav Ghosh's *The Calcutta Chromosome*

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Like Ghosh's other novels, *The Calcutta Chromosome* is merging different genres- science, history, magic, realism, thriller, detective and ghost story. This novel also stresses more on science; it is, indeed, a science fiction. On the surface of the narrative, it indulges in the historical discovery of Roland Ross's record of his experimentations in Calcutta. Ross acquired the Nobel-Prize for his discovery of the life-cycle of malaria. However, Ghosh refutes the colonial narrative; he, therefore, re-writes the history of malaria research, as he gives the subalterns more value in his narrative. All his central characters are ordinary people, not nobel ones, as Alu, the orphan in *The Circle of Reason*, the Indian slave Bomma *In an Antique Land*, the orphan Rajkumar in *The Glass Palace*, the fisherman Fokir in *The Hungry Tide*, and the sweeper Mangala in *The Calcutta Chromosome*. It is a real postcolonial discourse, which is unlike the Eurocentric paradigm; it is also a reversal of the roles, since the novelist focuses more on the oppressed rather than on their oppressors. In this sense, Ghosh says: "It follows then that the reason why I- and many others who have written of such events- are compelled to look back in sorrow because we cannot look ahead" (*The Imam and the Indian*, 317). In *The Calcutta Chromosome*, Mangala is a sweeper- here at the bottom of the social pyramid; and Latchman is a *dolly*-bearer. Both of them come at the lowest ladder of Hindu caste system. It is, however, that the two characters have been pushed to the centre-stage of narrative. It is, in fact, a post-colonial novel in its framework. Tabish Khair writes: "What Ghosh does seek to do- and largely succeeds in doing- is to depict the *Coolies* (the subaltern, in general term) as occupying a space" (160).

The Calcutta Chromosome constitutes as Ghosh's scientific travelogue in which he writes back to the hegemonic discourse of science from the margins of his postcolonial status. In this work he particularly probes deep into the scientific archives, navigating through memories, newspapers, and letters in order to shed light on the marginal figures who have been contributing to the scientific discovery and yet have been excluded from the records. In pushing the silenced towards the centre and giving them main concern over the conventional, Ghosh's postcolonial fiction unsettles the authority of the metropole. He achieves his goal by using the journey-motif which becomes an essential part in almost all his fictioal and non-fictional works. In this regard, Rukmini Bhaya Nair remarks: "Postcolonial criticism has been called travelling theory. . . . The very logic of its name seems to commit the postcolonial novel to reviewing the 'fact' presented through the lens of a colonial history by bringing them into the ambit of fiction" (164).

Ghosh's earlier works, *The Circle of Reason* and *In an Antique Land*, rotate around places between India and the Middle Eastern countries. However, *The Calcutta Chromosome*, goes further ahead to include also Europe and the United States. Born in Calcutta, Murugan has grown up in the Western capitals of London and New York. He attains a part-time job with Life Watch in New York in order to pursue "the early history of malaria research" (30). Therefore, he embarks on a journey from the United States to India. He becomes so determined to travel back home to do something special in his life. While reaching Calcutta, he is caught up running in front of the Presidency General Hospital on August 20, 1995, looking for the memorial of the British scientist, Roland Ross.

Ghosh subverts the traditional medical history by giving an alternative narrative of Ross's medical discovery. He presents the alternative through Murugan, who is a specialist in Roland Ross. Murugan says to Antar, "you won't find another person alive who knows more than I do about the subject I specialize in . . . as far as the subject of Ronnie Ross goes, I'm the only show in town" (43). While in America, Murugan writes an article, "Certain Systematic Discrepancies in Roland Ross's account of Plasmodium B", which receives negative reports in all journals (31). The second paper, entitled "An Alternative Interpretation of Late 19th Century Malaria Research: is there a Secret History?" proves no better than the first one. His hypothesis of "Other Mind: a theory that some person or persons had systematically interfered with Roland Ross's experiments to push malaria research in certain directions while leading it away from other" (31) estranges him more from his associates. Through Murugan, Ghosh confronts the official history of Ross's discovery. Therefore, Ghosh re-writes the colonial medical history from the postcolonial perspective.

The first principle of of counter-science, according to Murugan, is secrecy. In his meeting with Antar, he explains, "It would have to use secrecy as a technique or procedure. It would in principle have to refuse all direct communication, straight off the bat, because to communicate, to put ideas into language would be to establish a claim to *know*–which is the first thing that a counter-science would dispute" (88). The essential element of secrecy of counter-science adds to Ghosh's detective narrativisation the flavour of mystery, rendering it a version of the thriller and ghost story. This mystery is deeply rooted in Indian land as well as philosophy, and it is only Indians who can decode this conundrum.

The portrayal of some symbols, like pigeon, smoke, lantern and fire, draws attention to the significance of magic realism in Indian philosophy. Farley observes some people on the floor touching Mangala's feet to their heads. Besides, he sees: "a scalpel appeared in her [Mangala's] right hand; she held the bird a way from her and with a single flick of her wrist beheaded the dying pigeon. Once the flow of blood had lessened, she picked

up the clean slides, smeared them across the severed neck, and handed them to the assistant" (127). This shows that Mangala has developed a particular strain of malaria that can be cultivated in pigeons. She has found some way of making the bug cross over the patient from the bird. She has successfully utilised this method to treat syphilitic patients. In another occurrence, the same story reiterates to Sonali when she rushes to Robinson Street to look for Romen Haldar. She finds a lot of people assembling around somebody; the woman in the centre raising her voice, saying: "'The time is here, pray that all goes well for our Laakhan, once again'" (140). In this regard, Madhumalati Adhikari considers that magic realism "dissolves the boundaries between the physical and spiritual truths and explores the possibilities of existence of various levels of consciousness" (233). Further more, the novelist intentionally presents Muslim, Christian and Hindu characters interacting with Murugan's hypothesis, and also some of them involve in doing the rituals. That means Ghosh seams to universalise the Indian philosophy of the transmigration of the souls.

Mangala's assistant in her counter-scientific activity is Lutchman. In Murugan's account, it is Lutchman who directs Ross's attention to mosquitoes, while the scientist knows nothing about them (64-66). In conspiracy with his crew, Lutchman provides Ross with the mosquitoes and when Ross asks from where he has got them, he does not reply. Furthermore, the weird presence of this man all through the novel adds up to its colour of mystery, resembling it to ghost stories, and detective narratives. This marginal figure is present all over the novel, and he is truly the representative of silenced people.

Phulboni, the fictional character, is a great Bengali writer, who writes about this culture of silence in *The Calcutta Chromosome*. He has won the national award of representing marginalized people in his literary works. To Sonali, Urmila says: "Phulboni was a young man, he wrote a set of stories called *The Laakhan Stories*. They were published in an obscure little magazine and have never been reprinted" (39). Indeed, Phulboni has undergone a mysterious incident in his early life in 1933. When he gets a job with the British firm, Palmer Brothers, this post requires travelling to remote areas in order to mingle with local people to show them the quality of products. The company, then, sends him to Renupure, which is 300 miles away from Calcutta. It takes eight hours journey by train from Darbhanga to Renupur. When Phulboni gets off from the train at mid-night, he sees nobody in the station. Suddenly, he sees the station-master, who invites him to his home, but Phulboni insists only to stay in the signal-room. Unexpectedly he realizes many unusual things happening around him, like the disappearance of the lantern as well as "the imprint of the left hand" moving behind the lantern with no face (220). He is terrified by the two actions and leaves the room rapidly towards the station. He escapes death from a train accident. A strange scream is heard in the darkness, and it turns to be, "a single word into the wind- 'Laakhan'- and then it was silenced by the thunder of the speeding train" (227). Phulboni, Later on, has been informed that the station-master is no longer alive, and the person he has met in the station is a phantom; thus such experience plays a fundamental role to mould his personality as a writer.

Phulboni says: "Mistaken are those who imagine that silence is without life; that it is inanimate, without either spirit or voice" (24).

To conclude, Ghosh successfully de-constructs the Eurocentric discourse of hegemony by means of replacing the noble characters by silenced ones. Such characters, like Murugan, Mangala, Laakhan, and Phulboni come to the centre of the narrative. It is not only that, but the novel is also a celebration of the victory of the East over the West, dismantling Western sense of superiority. Therefore, *The Calcutta Chromosome* is a postcolonial novel that challenges and resists the colonial voice through the voiceless characters.

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Our First Ideas and The Modern Temper

Between the *ME* and the *NOT ME*: A Balance Sheet

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Nature is the gospel of the new faith rather than, like Thoreau's *Walden*, a record of the experience of earth. The primary assumption of this talk is that man, whether regarded individually or generically is the starting point of all philosophic speculations. His functions, his relations and his destiny are his only concerns. The self-reliance resulting from this assumption is essential to vital experience. Whatever truth lies beyond or outside man can be reached only through him and by him.

The "Me" according to Emerson, is consciousness – that part of man that partakes of divinity. The "Not Me" is the objective of consciousness that with which the "Me" is in relation. But Nature or the "Not Me' also partakes of divinity in that "outward circumstances is a dream and a shade". Its reality lies in its being "a projection of God in the unconscious". A second identity is thus established between Nature and God, and third, between Gad and Man. Here is a triangle of relationship, the value of which lies not in the absolute identity of Man, God and Nature, but in the common relationship between any of the factors.

Nature to Emerson, as the *commonsense* refers to it, is the essence unchanged by man, and the ideal sense is "the phenomenal expression of the soul". The possible ambiguity "is not material, no confusion of thought will occur". It is necessary to set up a provisional dualism in order to expose the ultimate unity.

Nature furnishes man with desire, but it also furnishes him with power of speech or means of satisfying desire in such a way as to threaten it constantly with extinction. Man is a paradoxical being, unique who strives for a perfection, which if attained, would altogether deprive him of his nature. If there is dignity in the human condition, it lies in the recognition that to exist is already to be in danger nor simply of death, but of consciousness as boredom. We preserve our dignity by pursuing the implication this shock of recognition, both helped and hindered by nature, and so preserve ourselves as we seek to overcome ourselves. Discursive thought is like fire. It purifies, but it also destroys. "History" is a process of re-emergence: Literally, an inquiry into human acts and speeches. Whenever, man becomes detached from things, or lost in speech, he comes to think of himself as a radically or exclusively historical being, a being, who is nothing but self-inquiring or more accurately self-interpretation.

I

History in the sense (the post-Hegelian concept of historicity) is, then, not simply a change, not merely a process, not even most essentially actions, but is a speech in the sense of self-interpretation. History begins from a memory of the past, or self-interpretation—known as "tradition". "Tradition", in itself, however, is only potentially history actualized by the critique or interpretation of "tradition".

The modern quest for freedom leads to the redefinition of man in terms of work, or its more recent name, creativity. But this, in turn, leads to the identification of man as a radically historical individual. And, this historicist tendency in our criticism is by no means a unique or isolated phenomenon, not just another specialized product of the scholar critic's specialism. The problem of history, to be sure, has been central to the formalist criticism, which gives our age one of its genres. There is, for instance, the great example of "Tradition and the Individual Talent", with its emphasis that the poet is he for whom history, or at least, the history of literature, is totally and immediately available.

If the tendency of that notable essay was to imply somehow that the poet was a prophet through whom history spoke, Eliot corrected it in his other brilliant essays of formal explanatory analysis, essays, in which his focus was the way a poet 'uses' the history, which he is given to "know" better than the common run of men. In "The Social Function of Poetry", Eliot writes that "the duty of the poet, as poet, is only indirectly to his people; his direct duty is to his language, first to preserve, and second to extend and improve…". That is, it is on the consideration of the poet's relation to his language that there must be centred any examination of his relation to his language and the tendency of a particular time and place. Through language, history and philosophy get into literature. For language is the principal vehicle for history and philosophy.

'Nihilism' is fundamentally an attempt to overcome or repudiate the past on behalf of an unknown and unknowable yet hoped for the future. The mood of boredom or hopelessness that is the most visible negative manifestation of nihilism testifies to the incoherence of the hidden essence of 'nihilism'. The nihilist invokes us to destroy the past on behalf of a wish which he cannot articulate. The classless society, the superman, the next epoch of Seinsgeschichte, so far as we in the present are concerned, are extreme revision of the kind of wish described by Socrates in the *Republic*. Plato, like every philosopher, whatever his politics, is a revolutionary: he wishes to "turn man around" to make them face in a direction different from that of tradition.

The difference between Plato and the nihilist, however, is this: whereas nihilism points us toward the historical future, Plato turns us neither backward nor forward in a historical sense. Plato wishes us to take our bearing in time by a vision that remains free of the transcience of temporality. The 'nihilist' is forced by the instability of the world to find stability in his own despair. He comprehends the worthlessness of all reasons as understood by him is "freedom" and as such he preserves it in the face of despair. In terms of modern mathematical epistemology, the nihilist is value-free.

According to Hegel, modern philosophy is decisively characterized by giving primacy to the freedom of subjectivity. And, nihilism in its full or positive version shares that characteristics, and may perhaps be its last necessary consequence.

As Marlowe implyingly contends, 'to be human is damnable', Socrates is accused of having veiled the self-manifestation of Being with a representation of how Being appears to man. In Heidegger's version of this accusation, the moral objections raised by Nietzsche are transformed into ontological distortions. For Nietzsche, we recall, the projection of (superman) an ideal, supersensible world, as the locus of value serves to drain the physical or physiological world of its creativity. Recognition of the worthlessness of the world in an ontological sense is the necessary condition for the creation of vital human values. Heidegger, accusing Nietzsche of Platonism or Humanism, reverses the term of the issue. The creation of the human value is itself a nihilistic interference with the "values" presented to man as a gift of Being. As such recognition of the worthlessness of human values is an essential part of the necessary condition for revelation of the world as the horizon of ontological value.

II

Despite this radical difference between Nietzsche and Heidegger, they share the view that Socrates or Plato is responsible for the emergence of 'nihilism' in the western world. They also agree that this responsibility emerges from a misunderstanding of man.

Heidegger's Being resembles a god-Socrates' "humanized" philosophy, by having brought it down from the heavens to the cities of man. According to Stanley Rosen[1], the positive nihilist's "response to a transient, worthless, and silent world is courage or resolution", and for the negative nihilist, "it is dread or nausea". Since courage or resolution is itself rooted in dread or nausea, it is easy to see that the mediating term is not reason, but "hope". According to Heidegger, "Being" implies the priority of motion and development to rest and completion. The "appearance" or presentation of beings within the openness of "Being" is a process, happening, eventually or eventuation, and belongs to the "common bonds of sight and hearing".[2]

Previously "truth" or "uncoveredness" was the same as "Being or the process of sprouting forth and gathering together in the openness of presence, now conceived as a property of statements about "beings". Truth is definable in terms of similarity or correspondence between propositional speech and the separate Ideas.

When Wallace Stevens[3] says, "poetry shuttles between ideas and actuality", he means that the poetry discovers the hidden nexuses between seemingly incongruous things. Truth visits us when we are least prone to the arrogant logic of the academics, and the privileged moment cannot be foreseen. It can only be recognized and accepted.

Reality as essence is not simple. It is unseizably complex, and if the poets, or even the philosophers succeed in approaching it, the verbal creation of the former will partake of that mystery: "The poem must resist the intelligence/Almost successfully", as Stevens had said in "Man Carrying Things", man's mistake has been to impoverish the "real" by

inventions of anthropomorphic deities, all of them transitory and inadequate to the inspiring source—the impersonal "first ideas". Both *dianoia* and *noesis* come under the generic head of *episteme* (knowledge), which Socrates found lacking in Homer and *Ion*. Both *eikesis* (the awareness of images, eikones) and *pistis* fell under the generic head of *doxs* (mere opinion) and both refer to the world of becoming *ta gignomena* (Cf. *Literary Criticism: A Short History* (ed.) William K. Wimsatt and Cleanth Brooks, 1967:13)

Plato reinterprets Being as the paradigm, which defines beings in terms of their calculative categorizable attributes. The Modern age begins with the definition of 'knowledge as Power'. It terminates with Nietzsche's conception of the *will* to power. Existentialism, strengthened by Hussrel's phenomenology as a method of subjective exploration of consciousness, comprises Christian existentialism. Phenomenology leaves the question of transcendence and true being in parenthesis, and concentration upon the importance of the phenomenal world as apprehended by consciousness, and so rejoins existentialism and Marxism. What Plato's doctrine of ideas is perhaps most known in its rather vague relation to the "beautiful" (to Kalon) and to love (*eros*) through his three dialogues, the *Phaedo,* The *Symposium* and The *Phaedrus*. In the first of these in his conversation on "immortality" held by Socrates with his friends on the day he was to drink the hemlock, we find the doctrine of "anamnesis".

What Nietzsche means by "the death of God" is then not merely the decadence of Western Christian civilization, but the opening of an abyss: the self-presentation of chaos as a disjunction in history, within which man is given the opportunity to renew his creative strength by a rebirth, which is also a destruction of his past. To be reborn means to recur to the level of the beasts through the loss of one's memory. (Stanley Rosen, 1969: 108).

Pascal offers the joy of grace as a more secure alternative to the pride of the philosopher (and scientist), which he rightly anticipates will not endure. From Pascal to Kierkegaard, one finds a more or less Christian insistence upon the sadness of natural life in which normal (Christian) motives are stimulated by the extraordinary threat of modern scientific but cold rationalism. The modern vision rejects or implicitly rejects popular religion as a political force and aspires to godhood or mastery of nature for man.

Nietzsche and Heidegger, in effect, accuse the Platonic Socrates of a lack of existential courage and a consequent failure to attempt a direct encounter with Being.[4] Whether this failure is one of human morality or ontological destiny, it leads to the effort to domesticate Being, to make it useful and so (as it becomes especially clear with Descartes) secure.

III

However, Socrates himself touches upon the danger of a direct encounter with things in the *Phaedo*. Physics and ontology are both speeches or icons of things as manifested in the human psyche[5] (ontology, in the first and simplest approximation is "speech about being" (Stanley Rosen, 1969: 31). "I am", infinitive stands normally for

"being" in the sense of "thing" or individual of any kind. A thing is identifiable by a shape or form which holds it together by holding it apart from things of other shape.

If we do not understand what "being" means or if we are right in supposing that it means nothing, philosophical interpretative of ordinary language with the use of ordinary language: "in my beginning is my end". That is, "Thing" would then seem to mean "anything at all". The ontologists suggest a pretechnical or pre-ontological awareness of the meaning of "thing". Thus, a "being" is a thing, and a "thing" is anything at all, of which all of us have pre-ontological awareness. "Ontology" then is the speech that discusses the properties common to things. Speech about man is called anthropology (Stanley Rosen, 1969: 32); about god "theology"; about star "astronomy".

Now, the problem arises in the mind is: "Things have being". As it stands, it is unacceptable since "being" has been defined as thing. It surely makes no sense to be told that "things have thing". Ontology then would be (if A=A), a kind of Dadaism and, the deepest or most systematic speech would be "an assertion of 'nihilism'". Hussrel fails to combine a Platonic or mathematical conception of the visible noetic or noetian form of things with a Cartesian or Kantian doctrine of the transcendental ego or subjectivity. Hussrel defined noetic form an *appearance* or presence before and so as presence within subjectivity. In a way reminiscent of the historical fate of the Cartesian conception of the clear and distinct ideas, Hussrel's phenomenon very soon became permeated by the temporality of the subjectivity in and to which it is present.

Heidegger's *Being and Time* contains crucial passage from eternity to temporality. In ostensibly transcending both the Platonic (objective) Cartesian (subjectivity) dimensions of Hussrel's thought, Heidegger excluded eternity from the horizon of human existence. Consequently the identification of the phenomenon with Being was for Heidegger simply the assertion of a more radical version of historicism than had hitherto been formulated. The phenomenon is not the factually apparent thing of every day temporal life, but the hidden being, the sense or ground of the thing. This hidden ground is accessible to man only within, indeed if not as the horizon of temporality. *Being and Time* takes up the discussions of existential structure on the basis of our pre-ontological awareness, for the final ontological speech. But in this final ontological speech never transpired, and in the context of Heidegger's thought it could never transpire.

The second half of *Being and Time*—the discussion of temporality is radically less satisfactory, than the existential analytic of the first half. Heidegger seems to have lost in the maze of the goal be set for himself. He cannot and will not achieve it.

Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* is merely a vulgarization of Heidegger's *Being and Time*, and makes certain theme more visible than the original. The only knowledge is intuitive. Deduction, and discourse, improperly called kinds of knowledge (connaissance) are merely instruments that lead to intuition.[6]

IV

Being for Heidegger is the silent process by which the world differentiates itself into the four dimensions or regions, Earth and Heaven, God and Man. It is a process of emergence of things, the process which as the source of thing, is also the origin of their essence. However, as process, Being gives to things not essence in the sense of traditional metaphysics. The essence is not a motionless form of nature, but a moving way—a way of emergence.

Socrates' *Phaedo* discusses his own transition from looking directly at things to taking refuge with speeches, so as to see in them the truth of things.[7] Heidegger shares the conviction that the significance of a thing is inseparable and unintelligible apart from our intentional consciousness of that thing. This is perhaps more obvious in Hussrel than in Heidegger. For both Heidegger and Hussrel, the essence of the unity of thought and sense (or being of the thing) is Historicity. The problem of "Historicity" is displaced in Hussrel from the noetic eidos to the nature of subjectivity. Heidegger avoids subjectivity and objectivity. Both thing and thinker, both col-lection and col-lector, are subordinated to the "and" or "col"—by virtue of the ontological difference.

Socrates, to avoid the twin dangers of Historicity and silence, to speech as the icon of things (in his example, the sun) to the sense or truth of the things as independent of thought revealed by, the activity of looking. He is led through speech beyond thought to the "safest" or steadfast hypothesis of the Ideas—"the beautiful in itself, good, great, and all the others". In *Phaedo* the "safety" of the ideas lies in their steadfast endurance against the modification of bodies (physics) and the glare of the sun (ontology).

As for the "beautiful" things, they are indeed beautiful "by reason of beauty"—that is, by participating in the beautiful—and beauty, what John Keats calls "Beauty is truth, truth beauty" that is all named only as one among other kinds of perfection (750-d; 100 C-e). Stevens' sun is a recurrent symbol of the "unthinking source", or irrational spring of existence:

> It is never the thing but the version of the thing
> The fragrance of the woman not herself.
> Herself in the manner not the solid block,
> The day in its color not perpending time,
> Time in its weather, our most sovereign lord
> The weather in words and words in sounds of sound
> ("The Pure Good of Theory", Part IV)

By way of comment, we may say thus that poetry is the daughter of loss, the consequence of the Paradise lost rather than the boundlessly creative original power many Romantics made it out to be. Our destiny is that of imitating reality, platonically, under a lashing irony that unmasks the puniness of our achievement.

The *Republic* is a dialogue devoted to the modern aspect of philosophy. Evil is associated with "darkness" of the icon. *Words and Numbers* share the deception of

genesis because they are the most characteristic product of the continuous motion of the psyche. The Ideas are not speeches. On the other hand, with Socrates, they are "hypothesis" and hypotheses are not projections or a "project" of the human will. The Ideas stand beneath the corporal motion to make them stand forth or to acquire and maintain visibility. In this sense, perceptible bodies are "projects" of the Ideas. The Ideas are not as Nietzsche thought, a moral hypothesis. Plato's moral teaching is a consequence rather than the condition of the goodness of the Ideas.

In everyday discourse goodness means useful, helpful or beneficial. To Socrates, the 'good' is a manifestation of Being in its openness or uncoveredness, in a similar way, Heidegger thinks of "the onething needful".

Throughout the early books of the *Republic*, the 'good' is identified with or in terms of the "useful". But in everyday life, some useful things cannot be called good in the ordinary sense of the term. This difficulty arose in regard to the noble or beautiful or just. That is "good" is measured by some standard, which divides it into "higher" and "lower". The "utility" in ordinary sense of the term became criterion, and as such in moral terms we call the "good" and the "evil" as a derivative consequence of the intelligibility of the world.

There are many beautiful things and many good things. Socrates distinguishes the two kinds in asking us to define one shape underlying each manifold, which designates the "what it is" of the units in the manifold.[8] This identification is possible because predialectical perception distinguishes between individuals and the kinds of individuals, or between the one and the many. The "whatness" of unity is the measure of the "thatness" of many. This "whatness" is called by Socrates an Idea. Etymologically, this word both revealing and ambiguous, means literally "look", and thus refers to the primary appearance of heterogeneity in bodies. On the other hand, we cannot literally see a "what", and many "thats" are neither bodies nor modifications of bodies, for example, numbers, geometrical forms, the virtues, theoretical definitions. The word "Ideas", as a term, designating "whatness" cannot be reduced to the look of a corporeal that. It calls our attention to a third distinction, between two kinds of perception or what we call seeing and thinking.

Each of the three distinctions we have just noted arises from thinking about seeing, which, by and large, has priority among the sense in Plato and Aristotle.[9] One might paraphrase this reason as follows:

Our vision, combines discrimination of former with detachment from body. Touch is an excellent discriminator of shapes, but only through immediate contact. On the other hand, hearing is restricted in its kind of discrimination because it is too detached from the corporeal. We can see both silent and speaking shapes, and the vision of tactile forms does not depend upon a distorting continuity with the shaped body. Moreover, to variety and presence, our vision gives us detachment or perspective. One may, of course, interpret the visual perspective as subjective distortion of the thing in itself. But Socrates' point is that the thing in itself is not and cannot be the same as the object of sense-

perception. A visual perception of X perspectival or partial in a sense includes the possibility of distortion.

V

With the psyche, "whatever it fixes its eyes upon what the unity of "truth" and "being" lights up, it grasps noetically and knows it, and is manifestly in possession of reason. Truth plus being replaces the sun as the source of illumination, one of the many passage that makes it impossible to identify "truth" as the correspondence between proposition and Idea.

'Knowledge' and 'truth' are both beautiful to Socrates. "Beauty" is a union of body and psyche. The connection between beauty and intelligibility is rooted in the unity of body and psyche. The beauty of eikasia, as linked to the body, is essentially pleasant. What Socrates claims is that by reflecting upon dianoia, hence inescapably by employing dianoia itself, we can divine or surmise.

And, "the death of one God is the death of all". Reality as essence is not simple, and is unseizably complex. Since "life's nonsense pierces us with strange relation", the "first idea" was not our own. Adam in Eden was the father of Descartes.[10] And Eve made air the mirror of herself. Primitive man is a harboured nasty germ of geometrically analytical and Narcisstic intellect. He should see through the enveloping air, not just mirror himself in it like Eve here in intellectual narcissism. Nature always has a primacy on art, on human imitations:

> But the first idea was not to shape the clouds
> In imitation. The cloud preceded us….
> There was a myth before myth began
> Venerable and articulate and complete.

Truth visits us when we are least prone to the arrogant logic of academics. And if revelation comes, it is extreme, fortuitous, personal, and our consciousness will experience an "awakening", but "on the edge of sleep", an utter heightening that sharpens our every day perception and enables us to look down from "an elevation" on the "academics" lost "in a mist".

Every love is a new beginning, and love is nature in the finest sense. To Stevens, "Beauty" is "momentary in the mind". But "in the flesh", it is "immortal". (Cf. "Peter Quince at the Clavier", Part IV")[11] Thus, "Poetry", to him, "is the supreme fiction" (Cf. "A High-Toned Old Christian Woman")[12] and, as evident from his poem no.3, poetry is the highest form of human activity. It is as if he were saying that poetry is the poor relation of reality, and poverty our permanent lot.

History, in T.S. Eliot's terms, is a pattern "half guessed", "half understood" and the "point of intersection of the timeless with time" is the occupation of the saint ("The Dry Salvages", Part V).

The most celebrated metaphor of our time is probably John Donne's comparison of the souls of the lovers to the legs of a pair of compasses.

Such with thou be to me who must
Like th' other foot, obliquely run;
Thy firmness makes my circle just
And makes me end, where I began.
(Cononization)

It has become a touchstone of metaphysical poetry. John Milton employs the compass in a very different fashion:

He took the golden compass prepar'd
In God's Eternal store, to circumscribe
This universe, and all created things:
One foot he centr'd and the other turn'd
Round through the vast profundity obscure,
And said, thus farr extend, thus farr thy bounds,
Thus be thy circumference, O World.
(P.L., VII, 225-31)

We may say: How like Milton! His compassion would be golden, and he would be intent upon, and contented with, the grandiose pictorial effect. The modern age rejoices in having recovered Donne in doing so, we have recovered not just Donne's poetry, but poetry.

To Milton, the fallen Satan is a figure of diminished light—a disparity between the normal sun and the (an) altered sun. Here Satan is not a sun high in the heavens, but a sun that seems level with earth, a dawning sun, whose light must struggle through the thicker air near the horizon, and through misty air, at that. In struggle his beams are shorn away. The beams are the "excess of Glory", overflowing from the fountain of light:

Less then Arch Angel ruined, and the excess
Of Glory obscured: as when the Sun new-risen
Looks through the Horizontal misty air
Shorn of his beams or from behind the moon
In dim eclips disastrous twilight sheds
On half the Nations,…
(P.L. I, 593-8)

And it's not the infinite variety of Cleopatra like quality in Eve but her grace of virginal innocence—an incitement in itself to the Prince of Evil. If it enchants him for a moment, out of his bitterness, and thus, releases him into Paradise, its final effect will be to inflame him the more—to thrust him back into "the hot Hell that alwayes in him burnes". He will repay her bereavement of his fierceness with the bereavement of her innocence.

Satan is a "pent" spirit—now literally pent up in the serpent but most of all pent up in himself and in the "Hell that alwayes in him burnes". The sight of Eve does draw him out of himself:

That space the Evil one abstracted stood
From his own evil…

For Satan, transported out of himself, for a moment, is a relief. To breathe the air of Paradise for a moment gives the sense of relief and enlargement. Surely Satan is not a young Keats, oppressed with the noisy city. In Satan, we see "th' excess/ Of glory obscur'd". And, though Paradise Lost is not just a superb organ music throbbing in an intellectual void—still our concern for his theological and philosophical consistency can push us into ruinous distortions of his poetry.

In Book IV, Eve gives her account of her first moments of consciousness and her first meeting with Adam. The sense in which Man is made in God's image—and the sense in which Eve is made in Adam's image comes in for our attention in Book VIII: It is the quality that distinguishes man from the brutish state, the possession of reason, exemplified in Eve's first conscious response to the state of affairs in which she finds herself. For Eve, it is not a matter of love at first sight, but for Adam, it is. Milton has been careful to give not only the first conscious thoughts of Eve, but also first conscious thought of Adam, of Lucifer, and of Sin and Death. 'Sin' is born from Lucifer, as Eve is born of Adam. 'Sin', like Athena, bursts fully armed from Lucifer's head. But with Lucifer, it is not love at first sight. He recoils from her, and she comes to please him—only later that he finds himself as Sin says, "full opt/ Myself in thy perfect image viewing…." But the Narcissism of Lucifer soon leads to incest, and of this union Death is born.

Milton then doubles the theme once more. For Sin tells that when she had borne Death, she fled from him, but that Death immediately pursued her and raped her begetting the host of yelling monsters that now surround her and feed upon her. Listen to Sin's speech to Lucifer:

Thou art my Father, thou my author, thou
My being gav'st me; whom should I obey
But thee, whom follow?

This passage reminds us of a parallelism between Eve's relation to Adam and 'Sin's' to Lucifer. And, compare it with Eve's speech to Adam in Book IV:

My author and Disposer, what thou bidst
Unargu'd I obey;…

Looking up "strait toward Heav'n", he contemplates the sky, but not the sky reflected in a pool. He observes the created world, and infers at once. Adam calls the creation and creature implying a creator, and to the "fair creature", he appeals:

Tell me, how may I know him, how adore,
From whom I have that thus I move and I live,

And feel that I am happier than I know.

He asks his maker:

In solitude,
What happiness, who can enjoy above,
Or all enjoying, what contentment find?

The fervent angel Abdiel addresses Lucifer as one "alienate from God… Spirit accurst…" (P.L. Book IV) This is the sin into which Adam and Eve are to fall: that of alienation from God.

In Book XI, God is regarded no longer as father but as tyrant. As Michael retorts: "This Makers Image…then/ Forsook them, when themselves they vilified…." What knowledge, then, does the forbidden Fruit Confer? In earlier section, prior to Book XI, Eve's speech can set us on the right track. As she exclaims:

For good unknown, sure is not had or had
And yet unknown, is as not had at all.

The forbidden Fruit gives Adam knowledge of good, and evil as we know them.

"The good that Adam possesses, he does not "know" he possesses. He will know that he had it only after he has lost it. Adam states this after the Fall:

Both Good and Evil, we know, Good we know lost and Evil got,
Bad Fruit of knowledge, if this be to know….

The predicament of "the unfallen Adam is really very much like the child described in Wordsworth's Immortality Ode: He describes Adam in the Epithets he bestows upon the child: "Nature's Priest", "Best Philosopher", "Seer Blest", "Thou, over whom thy Immortality? Broods like Day, a master O'er a slave". Yet the child cannot impart his philosophy and does not "know" that he possesses it. He is an "Eye among the blind". He is also "deaf and silent". The poet was himself once such a child, and having lost the child's knowledge, knows at last what it was that he once possessed.

But he can't know it and possess it. Wordsworth at the end of the Ode speaks very much like the fallen but penitent Adam at the end of the *Paradise Lost*. Both attain a wisdom out of suffering, and the "faith that looks through death". According to Dorothy Sayers, St. Augustine suggests Fall as a lapse into self-consciousness in the senses that associate it with shame, with isolation, with alienation and with the loss of the innocent rapport with the world about one. This is the knowledge that act of eating the apple brings the human pair.

VI

Milton furnishes Adam with the noblest motivation of sin. Adam's 'Sin' is ultimately of the same kind as Eve's: the first words that he addresses to her recount the story:

O fairest of creations, last and best
Of all Gods works

This is suggestive of the genuinely felt love for Eve. And, he calls her in his agony. Adam regards Eve with the eye of a sensual connoisseur. He has never known "true relish" until now that he has tasted the forbidden fruit, and he anticipates a special relish, now in the very act of love. Adam and Eve are each preparing to use the other for his/her own enjoyment. They are "knowing" and "self-conscious" about the sexual relations in a way in which they have not been prior to this, and in which, body, mind, and spirit participate intimately and in full. The sleep into which Adam and Eve fall is restless and full of troubled dreams, and when they wake, their eyes, as Adam complains, are opened, but opened only to see that they have been betrayed. The Serpent has cheated them with his promises:

Since Our Eyes
Op'nd we find indeed, and find we know
Both Good and Evil, Good lost, and Evil got,
Bad Fruit of knowledge, if this be to know.

Thus, as T.S. Eliot contends: "one thing does not change". "The perpetual struggle of Good and Evil" (Cf. Choruses from "The Rock", Part I). Experience is one's guide. Garden-state is not static nor the ultimate: Milton provides Adam's growth in grace and knowledge until, at last, Adam's body shall turn, "all to spirit" (Book V, 497). Adam's 'sin' was not really 'sin' but "good" being an eye opener.

Lucifer in Book IX rejects all hypotheses of creation. The mirror is here demanding equality with the source of light which it reflects: "I am no mere reflector of light; I am a source of light". To Milton (as he speaks in Book VIII), as Eve comes to see Adam as more amiable than "that smooth watry image"—sees:

How beauty is excelled by manly grace
And wisdom, which alone is truly fair.

That is, to Milton wisdom is superior to sensuous beauty. And, to Wallace Stevens, the first idea is the "Father-fire" of "Red Fern", the inexpressibly intact heart of the real. And, as in the first lyric of "It Must Be Abstract", it seems that the first "inconceivable idea of the sun", which the "ephebe" must learn by "becoming an ignorant man again". That is, he will "see the sun again with an ignorant eye/ And see it clearly in the idea of it", and he must "Never suppose an inventing mind as source".

For a poet, nature "becomes only words", and poetry a "supreme fiction". In America, as Malcohn Cowley states in "The Time of Rhetoricians" that the poet or creator has been superseded in modern America by the 'rhetoricians', i.e., by the refinedly competent critic by the Alexandrine man of letters. Wallace Steven's poetry has been interpreted as a continuous variation on the theme of ever changing relation between appearance and being—"Description without Place" affirms the identity of appearance and reality:

It is possible that to seem—it is to be,
As the sun is something, seeming and it is…

(Stanza 1)

Also in "The Man with the Blue Guitar", if we were momentarily to forget the miraculous lightness of this poem, wholly played on the magical interaction of 'reality and appearance', 'fact and fantasy', 'nature and art', a first answer could emerge from "The Motive for Metaphor", where the poet desires

> … The exhilaration of changes:
> The motive for metaphor, shrinking from
> The weight of primary noon,
> The ABC of being, ….

Here we have the dramatic confrontation of two opposite terms: 'reality' as a "thing in itself", a provocative sphinx and the artifice of poetical metaphor, which here epitomize all of human knowledge. Human fiction is incommensurable with 'reality' and 'reality' is a never-to-be exhausted challenge to human intelligence. But since the human mind is lodged in 'reality', it will have to find a way to overcome this paradox, at least provisionally.

If metaphor (and, by implication, all of poetry, all of knowledge) is a mere evasion, a "shrinking from being", it has no value. If it merely duplicates being, it likewise has no value.

Every mental act of any kind of intentionality is held together and so exhibited as what it is by a noetic shape which cannot be reduced to the mental act itself. This noetic shape (not to be confused with Hussrel's eidetic constitution within the flow of subjectivity) is the "thing in itself", or the Idea. Let me emphasize: Socrates does not claim that thinking as a psychic activity is free from perspectives. Instead, he claims that thinking works because, in each of its perspectives, it apprehends the source of those perspective illuminations.[13] Thus thinking is a "looking at".

According to Socrates, there are three "kinds" or elements involved in act of vision: The eye, colour, which makes the object visible and "a third kind, peculiar by its nature to this very function"—light. The light is thus distinguished from the sun is called an Idea which yokes together vision and the visible.[14] The sun, as the source or cause of the light is different from it. The term "Idea" is not applied to the sun as it was to the light. In other words, the sun as the good is not the same as the Idea of the good. In noetic terms, the Idea stands to the good as the light stands to the sun. The good or bad stands to the mind as the sun does to the eye. The sun when looked at directly blinds us, and the light considered apart from all visible bodies is itself invisible, or homogenous, (Ideas, sunlight) draws our attention away from its source.

The "Truth" of a proposition is thus not the same as the "truth of being", but an icon or reflection of it. Being as truth manifests itself as what it is. In Heidegger, "truth" means "uncoveredness" or "uncovering". According to Heidegger, Plato is responsible for the division of nature into two realms of the Ideas, and the phenomenal (historical) world. Instead of recognizing the unity of truth and being as the manifestation of openness, Plato concealed that process of illumination by mistaking the "looks" of things for their "being" and the correspondence of propositions to those looks for truth. The destruction

or exclusion of 'nature' and 'eternity', intended to regain for human appreciation the value implicit in this world, and mistakenly alienated or projected into another, supersensible, trans-historical world has resulted in the dissolution of "value" in the world of concrete history. The destruction of the past, for a new stage of positive human or super human existence, seems rather to entail the destruction of the present as well.

Plato is said to be responsible or source of the dehumanizing, devaluing or reifying of human existence, thanks essentially to his concept of reason which treats man in terms of calculation, utilitarian manipulation, or things, rather than the locus of the manifestation of Being.

VII

By implication, I accuse all those who follow Heidegger in their denunciation of "Platonism" of lacking an accurate grasp of the teaching they denounce. Plato actually furnishes us with a defence against the emergence of nihilism. "Nihilism" is a fundamental danger to human existence. Plato does not understand Being as a process, but if as anything then as the intelligibility of the world manifested in extra historical shape as whatness and as the intelligence, manifested as psyche, which grasps the world. The world of Ideas is not another, separate world, but the "whatness" of this world.

Stevens' sun is a recurrent symbol of the "unthinking source", or irrational spring of existence. "The super fiction" must indeed "abstract" from any historical super-structure, from any anthropomorphic assumption. It must go back to the sun of the "first idea" to the integrity of Being that man has obscured with his religious myths and by the very act of giving arbitrary names to things. The abstraction is not only an intellectual. It consists in a kind of Platonic contemplation that aims at seizing the primeval reality by going back to the upstream over the course of human history—the latter being only a progressive removal from innocent origins and, thus, something like a degeneration, the loss of Eden, where according to an Italian Poet Montale, "even a name, a garment, were a vice".

In the last analysis, 'reality', as essence, is not simple, but unseizably complex, and if the poet succeeds in approaching it, his verbal creation partakes of that mystery. Man's mistake has been the impersonal "first Idea", which has to impoverish the real by invention of anthropomorphic deities, all transitory and inadequate to inspiring source (of the impersonal "first idea").

Notes and References

1 *Nihilism: A Philosophical Essay*, New Haven and London, The Yale University Press, 1969, pp. 141-42.[2] Ibid., p. 147.

3 Wallace Stevens. "Notes Towards a Supreme Fiction", *The Inclusive Flame: Studies in Modern American Poetry,* Indian Edition, 1969,p. 89, Glauco Cambon, Bombay (Popular Prakashan), Indiana University Press, 1963.

4 Stanley Rosen, *Nihilism: A Philosophical Essay*, The Yale University Press, 1969, p. 149.

5 See *The Republic*, 596, c. 4ff. Socrates employs an icon of the psyche, as context makes it clear the numeric artist is compared to a mirror, in which one may reflect the whole.

6 *L'etre et le* neant, Paris, Gallimard, 1955. Org. Publication, 1943, p. 220. The idea is essentially Nietzschean.

7 *Phaedo*, 99 c. 5-6.

8 *Republic* 507 b. 2.ff. Qouted by Stanley in *Nihilism: A Philosophical Essay*, 1969. p. 178.

9 cf. Stanley Rosen's article, "Thought on Touch" in *Phronesis*, 4(1961): pp. 127-37.

10 Stevens has here in mind Descartes' "Cogito ergo sum", the act by which the French Philosopher proceeded to derive certainty from the thinking self by a "geometric" method of logical deduction. Later the idealists were to discover reality itself, and not only certainty, from the conscious self, and Stevens, atleast, thus, does not possess this arrogance.

11 See *The American Tradition in Literature*, revised, vol. 2. (ed.) Sculley Bradley, Richmond Croom Beaty and E. Hudson Long, Norton & Co., New York, 1962. p. 1465.

12 Ibid., p. 1462.

13 Socrates compares apprehension with prophecy which has something to do with the doctrine of recollection. See *Theaetetus*, 178.b 2.ff.esp.179 a 2.

14 507 d 8-508 a 3.

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Aesthetics and Death: Idealization, Horror and the Tragic Tetrad in *Hippolytus*

EUGENE NARRETT

> "…confirm how Cypris is when she comes. Giving the mother of twice-born Bacchus in marriage to a flaming thunderbolt, she brought her to sleep in bloody doom. For she is terrible, she blows on all there is, and like a bee she flits."
>
> * * *
>
> "Cypris the wicked one planned it this way. [1]

The most striking feature of *Hippolytus* is the opposition of Aphrodite and Artemis, but the antithesis is not simple. As erotic love, Aphrodite is an invincible archer (525-42); so is the virgin "ruler of arrows, Artemis" (166-7) who cherishes wild things and childbirth. They are at two end of the generative process. Between them stands Hippolytus, an "un-yoked horse" who has inherited the name and, in his allegiance, the problematic nature of his mother, an Amazon, Antiope or Hippolyta who either was killed in battle by Theseus or married him. The confusion of the mythic material reflects the status of the Amazons as wild figures on the outer edges of the Greek world and on Hippolytus' attempt at purity by rejecting "gods who are worshipped at night" (106). Amazons go without men except for service; he without women except for adoration. The tales of Theseus link the Amazons to Dionysos, Daedalus and the cannibalistic aspect of art, the turbulent id in identity, a pulsating unbridled force or 'site' where the self splits into a source body and an image ideal, idol or eidolon that eventually consumes its host as the paired goddesses do to Hippolytus.

Goethe portrayed this process in "the Witch's Kitchen." When Faust cannot avert his admiring gaze from the magic mirror in which he sees his ideal self, his "Helen" reflected, and sees her later as his "pale" Gretchen, Mephistopheles warns him, "Let that be…it is a magic image, lifeless, an eidolon…the fixed stare freezes human blood and one is turned almost to stone. You've heard of the Medusa…" When Faust protests it is his beloved, Mephisto adds, "that's magic art… you crave for illusion still."[2] So does Hippolytus, a representative not only of sexual confusion and strife but of Western poiesis and its transfigurative drive. Nietzsche saw aesthetics as primarily a matter of "erotic frenzy" and the discharge of Dionysian energy from the will. I will adjust the forms of his image-energy dialectic and offer an aesthetic model for interpreting culture. The idealizing tendencies in the West, a cult of aesthetics Chateaubriand praised and many seek to analyze are vividly embedded in Hippolytus' suicidal, impossible dream.

In essays on the literature of the 19th century and Classical Antiquity I have described the process and stages of image-work, the formulation and projection from the self or culture of an image ideal cleansed of traumatic or hybrid material. This process is similar to "the demand for beauty" whose origin may have been in the "melancholy, lack and pain," in the tragic awareness of ancient Greece.[3] Unlike Schopenhauer and Nietzsche, or Freud with his theory of sublimation, I do not see the projection and power of an eidolon as an act of clarifying order or relief from passion for the image contains the hunger of the "Will," an erotic energy that dominates and consumes its host: the ideal cannot abide the 'flawed' original no more than Artemis can accept Hippolytus or Semele live with Zeus. Thus image-work is an act of possession and displacement, a rape of reality or the self that, like the rape by Poseidon of Medusa transfigures and leads to transfigurative art. This is similar to Nietzsche's postulate that all art and aesthetics derive from frenzy at the core of idealizing and "ease of metamorphosis." The role of Aphrodite – Eros in this culture-forming aesthetic complements that of Dionysus.

Both the metamorphic impulse and the irritant of a hybrid or otherwise 'polluted' substrate that involves boundary transgression or "matter out of place"[4]; an intercultural mix or imperial colonization prompts magike tekne (image-weaving of new life). Nietzsche writes similarly that "the Greeks' ever more powerful *demand for beauty* grew from a lack, from melancholy…from pain." Beginning in an idyllic view of a purified persona, heritage or culture, say, the purifying attachment of Hippolytus to Artemis or the vision of Kurtz as a civilizing, clarifying and redemptive voice, image-work's "ease of metamorphosis" is a "discharge" of erotic energy from "primal pain" into an image ideal, a "mysterious marriage" in which the individual is shattered, transfigured, dissolved and transformed."[5] But "release and redemption through semblance" leads to a conquest of life by images, in the case of the Greeks, by gods who are like the beasts (hydra, centaur, sphinx, bulls) that embody their wills: the gods, quintessential images, in erotic dialectic conflict with their human substrate break the individual who sought transfiguration. This shattering of the individual is the Dionysian work.[6] Thus, image-work, the projection of self or culture into images that represent and displace its erotic power is tragic and has an elegiac terminus for cultures and individuals: the idealizations of art, the transformative god-work destroys individuals and cultures in a triumph of the image which is a triumph of shadow over substance, of illusion and eidolon over life, of spectacle over literacy. These are the "false characters" embodied doubly in the last letters of Phaedra and, more comprehensively, the false characters given to everyone and to every culture committed to the process of projecting self into an eidolon: the lament and horror that follow the transfigurative thrill, the defeat of nature that results from transferring identity to an image. This process may be a figure of meiosis, a splitting that on the individual and cultural level is alienating and tragic, part of a petrifying process hinted by Goethe's link

of an eidolon to Medusa and akin to Spengler's remarks on the trajectory from Culture to Civilization, the end of vitality and organic growth in ossified sensibility, megalopolis and imperialism, the latter being "civilization unadulterated."[7]

My study of image-work is textual analysis leading to a textual theory of culture. I use the term theurgic poeisis literally: the god-work that structures and transforms identity and relations. It is the mode and result, perhaps the purpose of ancient Greek image-weaving implicit in the Greek verb *idein*, "to see": to deify the id ("it," "that one") or transformative impulse that prompts generation and erotic trauma (as in *the Women of Trachis*) and is intensified by them: this transfigurative nexus, this id of primal pain is the beast-god. The de facto union of Aphrodite and hydra, for example "that drives the power of representation, imitation" and, at social levels, "every kind of mimicking and acting" whose core is "ease of metamorphosis."[8] Image-making *is* magic (*magike tekne*); the doublings, reflections and representations at its core, rooted in seeing, real and imagined, center on the marital bed, a site where god, beast, human and all relationships enter a transformative whirl where boundaries and norms dissolve as the identical or double consumes individual identity. Thus Jokasta curses "the infamous double bond" and marital "bed in which she brought forth husband by her husband, children by her own child," a paradigm of doubling's promiscuous magic, the "doubleness at the core of tragedy."[9]

Reflecting the Dionysian fury where cells combine and in idealizing poiesis when creator draws from himself an idol, an embodied reflection, image work in literature repeatedly shows a turbulent, eroticized monad splitting into a dyad that is unstable for the image is voracious and a source of fascinated worship like that of Hippolytus for Artemis who colonizes his thought and draws his adoration. The Representation has the magnetic and aggressive power of the Will, to adjust Schopenhauer. In image work, each member of a human pair will have its shadow, an object of desire and/horror (Mr. Hyde) establishing a tragic tetrad several forms of which appear in *Hippolytus* and most great Western Literature; it is part of the 'brand' or identity of the culture that with its idemptitas or clone grows from the id where the spitting image splits from the self desiring transformation to escape from the mismatched hybrid quality of the cultural substrate. In Greek tragedy, this idealization and its nemesis is god-work by a god-beast, Dionysus at basis, lord of drama and the rites of spring; the ancient form of the id that discharges its energy into images that refract it as Shelley, at his most optimistic made imagination, also an archer, refract love.[10] Examples and explication of this hermeneutic follow…

Theurgic poeisis inheres in the idealizing metamorphoses and transpositions of identity essential to aesthetics and hints at its roots in initiation rites when, "face to face" identity is mirrored in an identical, "an incarnate visual double."[11] The "secret rites" (*orgia*) of the god, the image-ideal arise from the impulse (*orge*) of sex and its multiple doublings which also mark a collapse of identity, for example, as Oedipus finds "this wife, no wife, this field of double sowing whence I sprang and whence I sowed my children."[12] This process of transformation, dissolution of boundaries and fracturing of

self imbues the ancient Greek sensibility and ensuing trajectory of the West from its 4th century declaration to its 12th century establishment as an "epoch of the Holy Ghost,"[13] an image cult, to its 19th century loss of faith ("this strange disease of modern life" in which "each strives, nor knows for what he strives") and change from a Culture into a Civilization.[14] The era's blend of beauty and horror, Symbolist clarity of representation serving exposure of horrific mythic materials, its lust for "entertainments and festivals" (the germ of professional sports and the renewed Olympics) now are mediated in processes that magnify the power of the semblance and degree of idealization, arise from "deprivation, from melancholy [and] from pain,"[15] from an awareness of essential contradiction ("god is dead," "the Sea of Faith" withdrawn) and resurgence in civilization of the primitive. As in the two classical tragedies about Heracles'[16] the structure and quality of this process of tragic recognition and self-negation is displayed vividly in Euripides' *Hippolytus*.

Greek aesthetics is powered by eros and sited in the bed and its erotic trauma which include possession, displacement and transposition of identity, establishing an emphasis, indeed insistence on metamorphosis as the dominant form of reality and knowledge. Nietzsche wrote that "ease of metamorphosis" distinguished the Dionysian and that the essence of art and the aesthetic, of all idealizing required "erotic frenzy" that resulted in "mysterious union" of opposing drives and sexes.[17] The transformative doublings of identity from the "it" of eros create a tragic tetrad of personae (masks) or characters that enact processes of erotic transformation in which the essence of the *idea*, the "pattern" or "image" that is seen (*idein*) is elaborated from the 'bed' in a lethal transfiguration of identity and relationship mixing joy and primal pain, redemption and horror. The theurgic aspect of this poeisis ("as he raved, some god showed him the way"),[18] the labile erotic ambiguities and god/image-prompted dissolution and transformation of identity are marked in *Hippolytus* with great clarity. His pain is encoded in his parentage and name, both the effluent of a "mysterious marriage" which, as Nietzsche argued is a figure of poiesis, of erotic possession, transformation and displacement. The trauma in the bed and his name may be indicated in a schema that marks the shift of life into artifice, ultimately into a liminal rite for maidens approaching the nuptial bed via the transformative site that embeds the hero's dead body.

Phaedra = Theseus = Amazon

Aphrodite > | | < Artemis

——————— Hippolytus

The two marriages of Theseus, a friend of Heracles[19] and legendary hero-founder of Athens anchor this doubling and provide not only the social, family and dramatic conflict but the entry points for the demonic, that is, the play's divinities, Aphrodite and Artemis most prominently, in mirrored opposition. They become one and "the same" (*idem*) in their shattering effect on the humans through whom they work and whose passionate confusions they represent. "The tearing apart of the individual becomes an

artistic event," indeed, the essence of image-work, and from "the highest joy" of the laughing goddess "there comes a cry of horror or a yearning lament at some irredeemable loss," the tragic result of the "yearning for release and redemption in semblance" or image ideals.[20] In Hippolytus as in many Greek tragedies, "the tearing apart of the individual" is literal, bearing an "added horror," — that the measured forms of art, the 'Apollonian' reveals the raw transfigurative power of god-work.[21] Diversely related to eros and wildness, Artemis and Aphrodite are agents of possession and displacement and thus carry the essence of image-work: destruction of the individual and generation of horror.

On the ninth labor of Herakles, Theseus joins him to steal the girdle of the Amazon Queen.[22] Euripides simplifies the various stories of the love or abduction and subsequent Amazon attacks on Athens in which Antiope fights either for or against (the ambiguity veils trauma) Theseus who weds either her or Hippolyta, daughters of Ares. This is an archetype from "the deepest abyss of being" and the "mysterious marriage" where individuality fractures into rapturous oneness that matters in the "divine order of terror;"[23] an "artistic phenomenon**."** This is the "release and redemption" of poiesis or aesthetics; the "frenzy" of aesthetics and triumph of "the semblance," a "reflection of the eternal contradiction"[24] as the human or cultural host projects an ideal which stands over it as a god, like an Empire to a colony. The attendant ambiguities, themselves types of refraction connoting the source of aesthetics in erotic trauma, may be why the play refers to Theseus' first wife simply as "the Amazon." More significantly, they suggest the erotic confusion, rage and terror that inhere in this mythic material. (Herodotus referred to the Amazons as *androktones*, "killers of men"). Hippolyta ("unbridled mare") and Antiope are a doubling of one idea or impulse**.** Hippolytus is thus named either after his aunt or mother (one thinks of Perceval's ambiguous relation to the Fisher King) and like her is an "unbridled horse" not in his lust but in desire's deflection to chaste love for the virgin huntress Artemis; this is yet another mysterious marriage and "eternal contradiction" sprung from "the primal pain" of erotic transformations and trauma. The adoration of Hippolytus for Artemis can never be consummated: it is pure image worship. The other side of his violent hatred of sex and Aphrodite is an image that transforms the violent, perverse eros of his maternal descent and the power that rules humans and gods: whose honey "blows on all that is." The Amazons' hostile stance toward men, whom they 'borrow' or own for sex, murdering most of their male offspring is reflected (an image of male sacrifice in coition), reversed as in a mirror in Hippolytus who is ruled by an image of a woman rather then enter a role of legal and social power. The discomfort with generative sex is in the very name: *a-mazos* = "breast-less" from the legend that they would cut off their right breast to facilitate drawing a bow.

The Amazons are fictions that idealize and represent aspects of Hellenic gender conflicts. Their appropriation of masculinity is part of an anti-male ferocity also embodied in Athena, Artemis, the maenads and Dionysus, god of frenzied possession, ecstatic

dissolution and sparagmos. Artemis cares for wild creatures with which the maenads have affinity: Actaeon and Pentheus are cousins. Hippolytus inherits his mother's defining skill, character and possibly her name (see above, Hippolyta) which will lead to his death by ironic mirroring as he gets entangled ('bridled') in his horses' harness and they drag him to death. What Nietzsche terms "the eternal contradiction" is the tragic "release…the highest symbolism of art" that splits the semblance from the self.[25] That is, his mother's ambiguous relation to Athens, to men and families destroys him through his counter-dedication to Artemis and the Amazonian blending of forces represented by her and Aphrodite, the gods that frame the conflict. The "philosophic eroticism"[26] noted in dialectic by Nietzsche is expressed in Hippolytus, the character and the play: the wrestling destroys him and exposes the Saturnalia and "Titanic disorder," in short the Dionysian impulse within the "demand for beauty" of the chaste, unbalanced youth and in the complementary agon of his step-mother.[27] The demand for beauty and image-work we inherit from the Greeks was accentuated by the friction between Greco-Roman and Hebraic matter in the West to generate "the terrors and horrors"[28] and subsequent elegiac lament inherent in the commitment to idealization; the triumph of the image-ideal is human tragedy and cultural collapse, the petrifaction figured by Medusa: it is not the idols but the human that shatters. Adapting Spengler's idiom, one might say it is the threshold at which a culture and its idols ossify into civilization whose directing cadres endlessly re-cycle images that come to have only a mnemonic effect. In this sense, civilization is the death of the human whose 'after-life' is that of a clone, a shadow.

The mythic material connotes additional sexual confusion embodied in hybrid creatures, figures of pollution. Centaurs are the male-equine composite that embodies sexual and instructive power. They were engendered by Ixion's embrace of Nephele, the cloud substance - image by which Zeus deceived him. Nephele derives from the Hebrew for "fallen ones," the "giants…men of destruction" in pre-deluge times (Genesis 6:4) who fell by erotic predation. Seeking to reject the erotic aspect of his nature Hippolytus projects it into a cloud-like form in his worship of the untouchable Artemis; a worship of a shadow that destroys him indirectly when Aphrodite punishes him through a step-mother who confirms his 'false character.' The deflection of his eros is tragic in its attempted swerve from the nature and name he inherits from his mother. Since centaurs are "bull piercers" (*ken-tauros*) this affiliation with the anti-male or aggressive female unbridled horse rather than magical male fiction, this rejection of promiscuous but also marital erotic power returns in his defeat and death by the bull sent by Poseidon.[29]

In fiction perhaps more than life, naming is destiny, the creation of a persona or mask which charts a mortal's path. Indeed, naming may be the primal representation, a literal impressing of character. In theurgic poeisis, names represent a site in the structure of erotic transfiguration: the mask/name is a portal for divine intervention. Hippolytus is a precarious liminal figure not mainly because the Amazons are barbarians thus making him by classical era Athenian law a bastard but because his descent complicates his own sexuality and heightens the traumatic components of boundary dissolution, splitting

and re-presentation. The Amazons figure gender conflict and Hippolytus both counters and expresses this inheritance by associating 'purity' with chastity and rejecting the bed of eros. His mixed nature makes him an exemplary site for divine conflict as represented in his adoration of the virgin huntress: "I like none of the gods who are worshipped at night" he asserts. When counseled by a servant to give all gods their due he rebuffs her, saying, "to that Cypris [Aphrodite] of yours I say 'good riddance.'"[30]

The implicit bond between the virgin warrior Athena, the Amazons and the protector of chastity and mistress of wild things, Artemis is built into many references to the names of Athens, site of the liberator-king Theseus, son of Poseidon[31] and slayer of the Minotaur, Phaedra's bestial in-law; one might say, the labyrinth in which the cannibalism of the id dwells is the hidden portal for possession in her inheritance. Spengler writes that the Greeks conceived Athena "as an Amazon";[32] expected to be a usurping son, the virgin warrior defeats, absorbs the war prowess and takes the name of the Titan, Pallas. "A temple to Cypris is set up beside Pallas' rock" an analog of how Aphrodite embodies Ouranos.[33] The ambiguities, violence and transfiguration that inhere in these relationships are the essence of magike-tekne, the image-weaving in idealization. They develop its pastoral orientation (liberation by an image), apocalyptic transformation (separation of the image from its 'body') and final, elegiac laments as the image dominates the host before its own petrifaction.[34] Idyll returns as elegy as the Hellenistic age emerged from the immolation of the classical era or as the new Christian idyll emerged from the ruins of Classical Antiquity and then took apocalyptic form in the twelfth century with crusades, gothic cathedrals and slaughter of Jews, the original host. As for the hero's death, "Cypris the wicked one planned it this way," states Artemis, denoting the transformative power of Aphrodite in her destruction of the protagonist and of Phaedra who was "stung by the goads of the goddess…and trying to overcome Cypris with reason… was destroyed" although not before her false characters gave a new kind of false character to Hippolytus whose intrinsically false nature and position emerges as the apocalypse of the play, the shattering of the image of purity, of the mortal attempt to embrace Artemis[35] which is like Oedipus running to his name and destiny by fleeing from it.

Hidden in this powerful material which lays waste to the life and family of Theseus and perhaps comments on Athenian ambition is the bond of Athena to both Artemis and Aphrodite, a variant of the triune archetype. Athena also is associated with weaving and, as such, a mistress of war, wisdom and imagery which we have seen is integral to the Hellenic notion of identity as a *seen* and *woven* pattern. The gods into whose family Theseus has married via the Amazon and then Phaedra, mortal daughter of Zeus, are the dimensions of poeisis with its pastoral, apocalyptic and elegiac trajectory: his story is a figure of the keen orientation of Athens to transfiguration. This is the identity and destiny of Hippolytus who may be seen as attempting to flee the erotic "sickness" in this pattern, this tapestry woven by his identification with a virgin goddess and other female virgins, as Theseus later, angrily but insightfully suggests. He can no more flee the pattern than his name. His willed transformation from man-husband to virgin-hunter,

roughly akin to that of Pentheus' enchanted cross-dressing and Orpheus' preference for boys[36] is an idyll ("phantom") that enmeshes him in the inexorable logic of fiction for Greek drama and the id "have no place for the individual." This is the process enacted at the "spectacle place" (*theatron*) of Dionysus in Athens, the city of Theseus. It is noteworthy that the three goddesses invested in Theseus are joined by Dionysus through the turbulent changes in Amazonian war, a divine tetrad of over-determined traumatic transfiguration, the essence, Nietzsche wrote, and erotic frenzy in all art. The drama's enchantments, transformations and sickness are the god-work, impulses (*orgein*), the characters *organes* (instruments) of music that transfigure by seen image-patterns reflecting the erotic mystery (*orgion*) and tragedy of Hellenic poiesis representing, perhaps, the physiology of reproduction.

Hippolytus' rejection of Aphrodite, rooted in his mixed, inherently polluted origins[37] is mirrored in his adoration of Artemis, pure in intent but laden with diffused erotic force. He brings the virgin huntress a "plaited wreath" gathered "from an untouched meadow" where "the scythe has not yet come." As a translator suggests, Hippolytus is "juxtaposing images of religious observance and purity with suggestions of sexual violation."[38] He states his special attentions to Artemis by addressing her as "most beautiful by far of maidens" and "most beautiful of those on Olympus." This is fine romantic praise but he can't see much less touch her and Hellenic divinities are famously jealous of their place in the worship of all mortals as the "hateful battle of beauty" between Hera, Athena and Aphrodite showed.[39] The imbalance in the relationship consumes Hippolytus as Herakles is consumed by his passions, the "poison" he fights in other forms in the hydra and Centaur, Nessus. The hydra, "nourished by Hera" shares descent, fertilization by bloody death, from Medusa, figure of erotic trauma leading to art's transpositions of identity, with the Sphinx, the challenger of identity, the symbol of magical mixtures and pollution that also reveals and punishes them,[40] hence its prominence in Symbolist art when the faith of the West broke and it confronted what it believed to be man's bestial, hybrid identity, — the id of poeisis re-formulated by the Symbolist mythographer, Freud whose ideas on sublimation and 'counter-formation' derive from Nietzsche and Schopenhauer.

As noted, Hippolytus inherits imbalance in his relations to gods, eros and art; descended from an Amazon, through his stepmother he is by family ties related to the cannibalistic Minotaur, the monster that represents those hybrid passions that, idealized as fictions, consume life. Hippolytus, trying to opt out, negates or sublimates the erotic material and, through figures and characters, eros kills him for it. His stepmother, Phaedra, like her sister-in-law Pasiphae is overwhelmed by a polluting passion that stimulates his misogyny, mirror-image of the Amazons' misandry: in part his tragedy figures gender conflict. Through his mother's sister, Ariadne he also has a family tie to Dionysus, the master of transfiguring energies, indeed the symbol and force of dissolution and transfiguration, of identity challenged, consumed and transformed.[41] Euripides has Phaedra stress her role as a transgressor of boundaries, driven by Aphrodite into a liminal and "polluted" figure: "*for my trouble goes across the boundary of life – a*

difficult crossing" (647-8). The allusion includes the role and erotic morbidity of Nessus the ferryman whose "treacherous words" prompt the immolation of Herakles just as Phaedra is "consumed" and her "soul tilled by passion" (503-05). Indeed, two strophes after this allusion, Euripides cites Iole "the filly in Oechalia…Cypris yoked like a running Naiad or a Bacchant…in a bloody wedding" (545-53): the "unyoked" is "yoked in a bloody wedding," the primal pain. More than invoking the Iole-Herakles-Dejanira-Nessus tetrad, with Aphrodite pouring her "sickness" through all the characters like the poison of the hydra, Euripides implicitly parallels the horse Hippolytus, "a bastard who thinks he's legitimate" (309) with Iole, emphasizing his role as a breaker of boundaries via sexual confusion, misjudgment and entrapment. Dionysus also was a 'bastard' by nature & reason who insisted on his legitimacy in art; while his paternity was august, being born both from a female and male 'womb' is an epitome of theurgic liminality, magic and confusion, of the stormy vortex of the id, the beast-god of art's transformations of the world of into semblance. Stressing the ambiguities of their link to possession, Theseus later will suggest that Hippolytus' chastity is like that of a maenad. Demonic transfigurations abound in the tetrad and into all of them "drips desire" from "the shaft [of] Aphrodite which Eros, the son of Zeus, sends forth from his hands" (525-32).

The drama alludes to another key feature of *the Bacchae*, that erotic possession, social disintegration, confusion of gender and of animal and human is a working out in poeisis of cultural matter imported from the east. Phaedra, like Minos and Ariadne, is a child of Zeus and Europa the Canaanite (in Greek, "Phoenician") princess from Sidon.[42] Like Kadmos and Dionysus himself, Phaedra bridges Asia and Europe, human and god-beast expressed in an incestuous lust that feeds on humans as do the maenads and the Minotaur the fruit of her sister-in-law, Pasiphae's god-sent lust. The labyrinth of art embeds and seems to contain the cannibalistic drive of the image with which Theseus struggles.

The cultural tapestry or ground-text mediating all these transformative, apocalyptic passions and idylls of impossible consummations is Daedalus, "the cunning worker," a figure of poeisis itself. His name is from *daidallein*, "to work artfully." The result of his work is symbolized by the fall of his son, Icarus that exemplifies the "cry of horror or yearning lament at irredeemable loss" intrinsic to image work.[43] Daedalus fashions the artificial cow in which Pasiphae hides to conceive the Minotaur from a bull, mediating a cycle of transgression and punishment in which eros becomes cannibalism, the trend of image-work (as Geraldine displaces Christabel). The lust of Pasiphae for the bull shows the erotic aspect of the metamorphic urge; the resulting beast and its cannibalism represent the horror in art's joy and in the fantasies it unleashes into the cognitive world.[44] Daedalus makes the labyrinth in which the monster is contained, consuming humans every nine years (a figure, perhaps, for the nine-month gestation that follows intercourse and conception). Art liberates rather than constrains the Dionysian impulse. So Daedalus complements Dionysus, born bull-horned from the genitals ('thigh') of the high god,[45] Zeus, who overpowers consciousness and identity, creating a world in which the cloning

aspect of cult initiation looses identity's exciting and terrifying fusion and violent transformation into the identical or reflection-image. In the postmodern orgy of digital imagery, shadows live everywhere and Dionysus rules.

Theurgic poeisis is art as mystery religion that includes martyrdom and transformation to an image-ideal: the human dreams himself into his own idol, worshipping an idealization and attenuation of the self. One is possessed and transposed from identity to identification and the id of communion by a mirroring that is the essence of Hellenic poeisis ("the doubleness in the origin and essence of Greek tragedy"),[46] a dissolution or immolation and transformation of self. As Pentheus, enchanted and cross-dressed becomes a mirror image of his cousin and of his maenads, so "the Stranger" from Asia describes the transformative initiation of poeisis: "…face to face. He looked at me, I at him. And he gave me his sacred rites."[47] This is the process in which Hippolytus is enmeshed by trying to escape it: like Iole, he is in "the net" of erotic frenzy, of art. There is no escape for humans in Hellenic theurgy; life is tragic and repetitive, not comedic and purposeful: the perceived self-negation and primal pain at the nexus of being is pitilessly exposed. The multiplying fictions of poeisis do not liberate but entrap: the marriages of Theseus gives Hippolytus a 'false' or ambiguous and tormented character (turns him into a fiction that destroys his life) as Aphrodite gives a false, tormented character to Phaedra who herself results from the mating of Zeus and Europa (the Asian princess from whom the West, a false collective[48] eventually took its name, commemorating the appropriation and displacement of poiesis): art and generation collaborate. For the Greeks this meant an endless series of false characters, an engraving that deforms. The erotic component of Hellenic poeisis elaborates labyrinths of voracious images. There is no escaping the power of the fiction and its image-weaving of transposed identity, of passions embodied in images, like Medusa, that consume lives.

The worship of Artemis is a paradox, — an aesthetic denial of sex that ensures traumatic transformation even before Aphrodite speaks the play's proem, beginning, "I am powerful." She emphasizes her identity and names (e.g. Cypris), noting that "I trip up those who are proud towards me," those who resist me. So do all the Greek divinities but none more so than she (older than Zeus, as Eros she pervades creation)[49] whose distinctive attribute "breaks the limbs' strength" and "overpowers the intelligence…in all gods, in all human beings."[50]Just so, she seizes the heart of Phaedra "with a terrible passion" through which, "moaning and overwhelmed by the goads of passion" and its "sickness" she dies desiring her step-son and thus, via an ironic chain of fictions steers the youth to "the gates of Hades."[51] The Amazon is thus expunged and the attempt to negate her wild influence undone. The Greeks perceived no escape from eros or its figurations in poeisis. After its various apocalypses, their culture weakened into the elegiac idylls of the Hellenistic age; then, under color of Rome possessed, transformed and displaced Hebraic culture, shattering it like the "individual principle," taking the resulting synthesis for its identity in a crowning "mysterious union," erotic trauma, rape, returning on a trans-cultural scale: the image or 'holy ghost' consumes the man.

The power to break down, destroy or dissolve the individual that Aphrodite shares with Dionysus resembles the cultural dynamics exerted by tragedy as discussed by Nietzsche. It is notable that Marcuse ascribes a similar power to psychology that "dissolves" and de-constructs the individual into his "archaic" cultural components.[52] Probably without so intending, Marcuse identifies psychology as a resurgence of the Dionysian in the Modern West. What he does not understand, at least in *Eros & Civilization* is that "self-consciousness and reason" serve both the will and the image ideal projected by the will and dominating the individual culture or self that worships it. Shakespeare demonstrated this in many tragedies; Melville knew this in his portrayal of John Claggart, the Master of Arms whose "reason was but a lawyer to his will that made ogres of trifles," monsters from daily events and a frustrated will fascinated with its image-ideal, Billy Budd, the "cheerful sea-Hyperion" whom he represents as "a man-trap under the ruddy-tipped daisies." As he looks at Billy, Claggart's feelings and features express idyllic longing as it prepares to engender and already contains, apocalypse and elegy. As he watches Billy, his ideal, his face has "a melancholy expression…suffused with incipient feverish tears." And "sometimes, the "expression would have in it a touch of soft yearning, as if Claggart would have loved Billy but for fate and ban." But at other times, "a red light would flash from his eye like a spark from an anvil in a dusky smithy." Melville emphasizes the erotic – demonic, that is Dionysian substrate of the will[53] that worships and hates the image-ideal that contrasts with it in a hostile complementarity. So he gives it a false character**.** This aligns with Melville's contemporary Nietzsche's comments on the Dionysian "erotic frenzy" essential to idealizing art and its destruction of the individual which Marcuse attributed to psychology nearly a century later. The logic of ancient Hellas working within Western culture, in the social sciences exalts in order to de-construct the individual. On the macrocosm, it subsumes the human in rapturous fusion with the image, 'globalism' (a fictional "world community"). The Dionysian drive of image-work emerged, via reason driven by will, in the deconstructive analyses of psychology and in the geopolitics of a financial-diplomatic oligarchy acting itself like an image detached from and in predatory relation to national and individual bodies.

"Strong is the victory the Cyprian goddess always wins," chants Sophocles' chorus, "Cypris, goddess of love's bed," even Zeus, Hades and Poseidon are conquered by her.[54] All fall beneath the arrows of the primal energy of the cosmos later sanitized by Schiller as Joy. "How foolish one would be to climb into the ring with Love and try to trade blows with him, like a boxer. For he rules even the gods as he pleases, and he rules me," says Deianeira, reasonably, given the inherited mythic matter. Then "why not another woman like me," she adds referring to Iole's assumed passion for Heracles.[55] Her understanding does not save her; still less can a mixture of pragmatism, defiance and rectitude stave off her might in *Hippolytus*. Aphrodite exerts her power through Phaedra whose death note works like the "treacherous words" of Nessus, the centaur, whose lust and revenge bring the action in *WT* to "murderous confusion"[56] much as do the "lies like truth" and "equivocations of the fiend" in *Macbeth*. The startling functional conjunction

between the Cyprian's inexorable power and that of Dionysus leads, when Hippolytus rejects it to the 'rape' of horse by bull. Aphrodite, embodiment of transfigured eros as described in Hesiod, will prove on him that she is "powerful" by a complex deceit using his own family's divine ties as the agents of destruction, the gods or fictions returning as beasts to destroy the human. Aphrodite's indirect approach is like that of Nessus, the ferryman who "brings across" the id of primal pain and eros. His liminal character, half horse, half man suggests the attributes and talents that Hippolytus inherits from his mother and that destroy him;[57] they suggest also intriguing congruities between Amazons and centaurs. In any case, murderous transfigurations effected by the passion acting through the highest gods are multiplied in a meta-poeisis as Phaedra's dying 'characters' make an enraged fool of Theseus and doom Hippolytus with the divinely powered curses Theseus received as a 'gift' from Poseidon, his own father.[58] It is like the gift of Daedalus to Icarus; of the envenomed robe Nessus gives Herakles via Deianeira, returning to him the venom of desire; like Oedipus untangling the Sphinx's figure and thus returning to the primal scene, its joy and pain. The gifts of the gods are image-work suffused with eros, the tragic process of theurgic poeisis that shaped the West.

An enraged Theseus condemns what he sees as malicious hypocrisy and deceit based in the sexual and moral extremism of his son's devotion to Artemis and virginity. "*You* are virtuous and pure," Theseus exclaims, "a huckster…" But the key point is his linking Hippolytus to Orpheus and telling him to "play the bacchant" that confounds victim with his murderers for the youth has attracted his own doom:[59] his idealization is suicidal. Like Pentheus in his cross-dressed disguise and Orpheus, after the death of Eurydice, in his determined pederasty, Hippolytus refuses his erotic passion which is as destructive as misplacing it: the poiesis of dissolution, working through the gods will enforce itself and demonstrate its power in the Theatre (spectacle-place) of Dionysus at the annual Dionysia. He becomes a site of erotic trauma that carries forward the results of trauma in the nature of his Amazon mother, a fiction made 'real,' an eidolon like the 'Helen' Faust sees in the mirror of the "Witches' Kitchen," the "form divine" that shines back at an individual or culture through the "magic mirror" of image-work. Hippolytus is a skewed but plausible youth: his mother a plausible fiction of gender hostility, whose nature, by paths described above, destroys him. She, after all, makes him an "illegitimate" figure, "matter out of place" that must be expelled by the social body whose continuance he rejects. He becomes, in his martyrdom to divine polarities a site of liminal holiness, the tributes of maiden hair an inverted insemination recalling and reversing his early weaving for Artemis of a "plaited wreath" from "an untouched meadow." His story is a paradigm of Aphrodite's "secret bed," the transfigurative weaver and the erotic trauma that energizes theurgic poeisis.

The transformations do not cease with the death and glorification of Hippolytus into a site of generative liminality. Artemis assures him, as he lies dying, that the elegiac phase of his own role, a pawn in the fictions of the gods, will insert an apocalyptic edge into the pastoral affair of Aphrodite and Adonis. "I will take vengeance with these, my

inescapable arrows," Artemis vows, "on one of hers, whatever mortal is her very dearest." Thus, the eidellion of 'Venus and Adonis' ends with the castration (gored 'thigh') of Adonis and his transfiguration into beds of anemones "sprinkled with sweet-smelling ambrosia." Aphrodite/Venus says, "Adonis, for my sorrow, will have a lasting monument; each year your death will be my sorrow but your blood will be a flower."[60] The elegiac phase of image-work leads to an eternal pastoral, a monument (art that transfigures past to present, death to life) to the apocalypse of martyred, transformative passion. Adonis and Hippolytus are mirror images as are the goddesses that destroy them: all four are tropes of reflection and auto-erotic completion, a dead-end for mortals, a glory for the beast-gods of art that mediate them as Herakles is the "glory of Hera."

Pertinent to the transfigurative and transgressive role of Aphrodite, Adonis, her mortal favorite and vector of pastoral and elegy, beginning and end of theurgic poeisis, stems from the incestuous passion of Myrhha for her father, Cinyras, king at Aphrodite's cult center in Paphos, Cyprus. Myrhha consummates her passion by disguise, modality of transfiguration, at the festival of Ceres, grain or seed.[61] Refracting these transformations further into the web of erotic image-weaving, Cinyras is the son of Paphos, the daughter born to Pygmalion and his female statue that softens into life as he fondles her in the temple and on the island of Aphrodite (site of Othello's destruction by sexual jealousy). As Pygmalion loves his statue, Myrhha desires her father, figures of auto-eroticism that produce Adonis, Aphrodite's human toy whose castration reflects her own substance, formed from male members.[62] His very death attests and mirrors the horror within the "sweetnesses" of her identity. One could say that in Ovid's tale, Artemis interrupts Aphrodite's masturbation, itself a trope of idealizing art. The trope extends to the other myth of Aphrodite's parentage from Zeus and Dione, the latter name being the genitive of Zeus and guardian of his oak. Thus, in this variant, used by Homer, Aphrodite results from the self-insemination of Zeus (a thematic and morphological tie to Dionysus) rather than the dismemberment of Ouranos. Again one sees transfigurations of aesthetics and religion rooted in eros and its trauma. On a lighter, pastoral level of transposition, as Zeus brought Europa to Crete, Ovid transposes the fictional incest from Cyprus to "Panchaia," the land of "cinnamon and balsam, frankincense and myrrh" (that is, the Middle East)[63] and then brings it fictionally back into his Europe, the continent of the "expansive gaze," the 'wide-eyed' cult of *idein* and festivals of *theatron*, the culture for which redemption has a cutting erotic and imperial edge by the dynamics of its images.[64] The erotic poiesis of metamorphosis weaves and works its impulse and mystery throughout the play of its passion, mingling and appropriating cultures, transmuting and subordinating life to fiction, the 'Helen' or Medusa in the magic mirror.[65] Pygmalion's idyllic art, via Aphrodite results in the elegiac pastoral of Aphrodite's transforming the dead castrated Adonis into a bed of anemones: apocalypse prettified. It is the tapestry of theurgic poeisis, a meta-figure of image-work's last stage: burial of a human.

A similar pattern informs *Hippolytus* which shows how the power and rage of the bull figures in the cyclic, self-perpetuating aspect of theurgic poeisis. The abduction of

Europa by Zeus to Crete begins the cycle. Their son, Minos refuses to sacrifice to his father, perhaps refusing the figurative abductions of poiesis. His wife, Pasiphae pursues what might be called an inherited passion, the aesthetics of erotic frenzy, and conceives the Minotaur who eats humans. As noted above, the monster's cannibalism is a type of the intricate mind and imaginings[66] of Daedalus, the artist who fashions the artificial cow for Pasiphae's transfigurative passion and then makes the labyrinth to contain its issue: the image reveals and conceals as the child does its parents. With the help of Ariadne, his wife Phaedra's sister, Theseus slays the Minotaur but does not escape the transfigurative eros centered on bestiality, bulls and cows. To avenge his wife, a daughter of Zeus and Europa, through his curse – gift (though he only threatens rather than explicitly invoking it) he raises up his father Poseidon in the form of a bull to destroy his son, the unbridled horse who enmeshed in his own horses' reins is dragged and battered to death, as he is enmeshed in his Amazon mother's ambiguous identity and in the passion sent by Aphrodite through Phaedra (as Theseus was enmeshed in wrestling with Amazons). The *id* in the identity of these warring, loving and related characters appears in the same (*idem*) forms of the god-beast which traps them in a maze. Their identity is identical and the idealizing of art brings them together in the logic of poiesis as the image and legend destroy the humans from which they derive and whose passions they represent. Symbol of power, the bull was a primary sacrifice to Zeus and embodiment of the "it" of fertile physical might expressed in sex, the force which for the Greeks generates and transforms all things, human and divine. Poiesis is the *orgia* ("secret rites") of the *orge* "which works" *organon* the changes that fuse identity and its reflection or "identical," the pool in which the human, essentially narcissistic in their view, is mirrored and drowns in the genetic pool and pulse of life.

The conjunctions of Hellenic sensibility and the myths it evolves are figured in the bull, the maze ("breast"), bestiality and the monstrous hybrids and cannibalism in this and other (the line of Tantalus-Pelops-Atreus) transfiguring tales. The collapse of the imagery (the pattern or idea that is "seen" and flowers into identity) is expressed in a few lines about Minos, sacrifice (which for the Greeks ultimately must be a human sacrifice), Daedalus and the famous maze which reticulate curiously with the tragedy of Hippolytus:

And Minos duly paid his vows to Jove, a hundred bulls…and in the palace hung up the spoils of war. But in his household, shame had grown big and the hybrid monster-offspring revealed the Queen's adultery, and Minos contrived to hide this specimen in a maze, a labyrinth built by Daedalus, an artist famous in building, who could set confusion and conflict in stone and deceive the eye with devious aisles and passages. [67]

Like Medusa, the archetypal artist (the horror of the process petrifies), Daedalus sets confusion and conflict in stone, 'fixing' it and fooling the eye that sees patterns of images. Then, seeking to escape Minos, Daedalus fashions a gift-curse of wings for himself and his son who is destroyed in a thinly veiled murder-suicide that parallels the conflict between Theseus and Hippolytus (or Deianeira – Herakles). As noted above, a "hybrid monster" is embedded in his name suggesting he is the male image of his mother,

as a more explicit beast is embedded by Daedalus in the maze. In the name and myths of Hippolytus and Daedalus bulls and horses, bestiality, human and animal sacrifice mediated through the transfiguring power of Aphrodite converge in the primal poiesis. Picasso tapped it in his Minotauromachy series which may figure his own masterful erotic aesthetics as well as for erotic conflict and confusion generally.[68] The harlequin, Picasso's self-representation or 'double' like a servant in Milesian comedy or the Nurse in *Hippolytus* often serves as go-between or liminal vector to effect transformative erotic consummation and tragedy. The essential conflict of bull and horse, diverse emblems of masculine erotic power (the silens originally were horses)[69] are embedded also in the material of this play and the myth of Ixion, his lust for Hera; the deflecting of lust by imagery (a conflict of 'will' and representation) and the resulting race of "bull-piercers" that embody the triumphant power of the horse. Here, however, the horse is a victim whose "body is pure of sex," who has "a virgin soul" like the goddess he adores.

Given the role of the harlequin-Nurse, the play's tragic tetrad may be re-configured as a doubling of the marital bed:

Poseidon > < Theseus = Phaedra
Amazon — | | < Aphrodite [70]
Artemis > < Hippolytus ——— Nurse

There are four humans and four images. The figure collapses into the dyad of Theseus and the Amazon and the monad of their coitus. The myth centers on the transfiguring erotic adventures of Theseus: the Amazon's girdle and descent through the labyrinth to the Minotaur and cannibalism. Its mystery and primal pain are in the alternate accounts that he killed her in battle or married her, archetypes that are two sides of a coin. The Amazon and her 'bastard' are matter out of place; so is Artemis outside the circle of eros where the wild emerges like a Dionysian discharge. Her divine opponents both side with the Trojans who host Aphrodite's supremacy. To contain disorder for the Greeks, even during their classical period requires transfiguring human sacrifice. In the counter tradition of the Hebrews, disorder (*Erev*, "evening") becomes a complementary source of order (*Boker*, "morning") to which its recurrence is assimilated. The etymology proclaims that "order" and "control" are natural and, indeed, akin to a bull (*bakar*), not undone by it. But in *Hippolytus*, as discussed and as abbreviated in the above schema, Phaedra, her nurse and the unnatural purity of Hippolytus provide entry for Aphrodite; then Phaedra's vengeful fiction prompts Theseus to invoke Poseidon as a bull to destroy the unbridled horse and fulfill the work of Aphrodite. For the Greeks, earth, sea and humans bring forth their kind only through human sacrifice.

These *motifs of deception*, rooted in the aesthetics of seeing, image-weaving and the bestial tapestry of possession and transformation also express their convergence in the persona of Pentheus and his fusion with Dionysus as a sacrificial beast-god-man. Pentheus is like Hellas and its visual metamorphic orientation, the "demand for beauty" that absorbs its fictionally abducted Europa into itself; Europe transfigures / transgenders

its identity in a sort of mirror-image of the formation of Aphrodite: it cannot contain the disorder of its hybrid nature wed, as it is to idealization, semblance and veiling so its imagery exfoliates. Like the West, Pentheus is "the one eager to see what [he] ought not to see and seeking things not to be sought." When the veil of art is lifted, the horror of its impulse is bared and the result is a culture of terror. The Hellenic West's commitment to effacing boundaries dooms it via Dionysian 'god-work' to fragmentation and the destruction of life by fiction. The latter appears or reveals the mystery of its monstrous hybrid character, one that makes two and then re-doubles, to the enchanted, cross-dressed Pentheus as a bull representing the "doubling" character of image work; Hellenic theurgy is a kind of meiosis, splitting and re-combining cultures as an artwork: it is a meta-culture that dies to generate other cultures. The total artwork of Symbolist origin is its natural last stage. As for doubling in the source, "the doubleness in [image-work is] the origin and essence of Greek tragedy," in his mystery-initiation, Pentheus sees "two suns and a double Thebes[71] as he goes forth to his apocalypse, a disguised suicide with long ensuing elegy as he marries, or becomes his cousin, Dionysus-Zagreus. This also is the framework for Hippolytus, Oedipus, Herakles and all heroes of the spectacle. In *Hippolytus* and *the Bacchae*, a bull embodies "the will of the beast" that infuses the transformations and the brutish irony encoded in the pastoral orge and eidolon of poiesis; this in the theatron of Dionysos "who has a double nature," working with and through Aphrodite, the glimmer twins of Greek poiesis, most mild and most terrible to mortals.

This doubling forced by theurgy is present in *Hippolytus* in the mirroring positions of Aphrodite and Artemis. Aphrodite, "the silent handmaiden" possesses Phaedra, balancing her rejection by Hippolytus. The secrets or fictions by which Aphrodite operates ("the sweetnesses and deceits of love")[72] are activated by the Nurse. But the 'harlequin's work, as in Minotauromachy is Daedelian: it elicits a trumping counter-deceit or fiction from Phaedra whose suicide, like that of a terrorist-bomber successfully elicits murder via the theurgy of Poseidon as bull loosed by the father on the son. This is the jealous, punitive pattern of father-son conflict that the Greeks transposed onto the "compassionate Father" of the Hebrews who forbids human sacrifice much less *sparagmos* (even of animals) and *omo-phagia*. The Christian formula synthesizes the traditions; the hybrid comes undone.

In her passion for Hippolytus, in an erotic frenzy of idealizing, Phaedra envisions transforming herself to a huntress in the train of Artemis so she may be close, in a maenad-like rapture, to the Amazon's son:

> I will go to the woods…where the beast-slaying dogs run at the heels if the dappled deer. Please, by the gods! I desire to shout to dogs, hold a pointed weapon…and hurl a Thessalian spear… Artemis, mistress of the sea's Mere and the hippodrome…I wish I could be on your plain. [73]

This outburst shows the power of Aphrodite and underscores the relation of Hippolytus and his Amazonian descent to the horse (hippodrome) and Artemis. In the blindness of passion, Phaedra supplicates the wrong goddess: Aphrodite destroys her

and, through her, Hippolytus; Artemis gets the last word, both elegiac-pastoral and the menacing reference to Adonis. Thus the two goddesses, engaged at different stages in the work of generation combine in lethal transfigurations of art, fictions that destroy the humans through whom they work and whose fascinated-worship, as projected image-ideals, they command. Enhancing the complications of the mirroring, "the plain" on which Phaedra wishes to join Hippolytus may be the un-scythed meadow from which he wreathes Artemis a garland, the tumulus on which Hippolytus receives showers of pre-nuptial maiden hair and of Aphrodite lying among the anemones of her cult's incestuously generated human toy, Adonis. Both are figures of idealized and idyllic coition, forms perhaps of art's willful self-pleasuring. In both cases the pleasure matches the emotional or physical fracturing of an individual.

Transformed into a monument, liminal site or flower (itself a fiery mediator between light, water and earth), Hippolytus and Adonis, kin via their martyrdom to goddesses at each edge of the erotic spectrum, and fused via Phaedra's brother-in-law, Dionysus to all forms of boundary transgression epitomize the demonic aesthetics of classical poeisis. The humans from which stories and passions arise, as if by the prompting of divine beings are destroyed by these fictions and transposed into them, that is, into symbols or monuments just as those who gaze at the Gorgons turn into sculpture. The god-beasts make art and with its "highest joy comes a cry of horror or lament at something lost."[74] My discussion of image-work identifies this paradox as the splitting of the image ideal from the individual or cultural body, a displacement of energy and life into the image that exhilarates and frightens, with the terror increasing over time as the image (god) dominates and drains life from its source or host. "Would that the race of mortals could be a curse on the gods" cries Hippolytus, seemingly to condemn theurgic poeisis, and the Hellenic mindset in its foundations; "easily you leave a long companionship."[75] But Hellas could not reject its image work; even when its ossified culture shattered it transformed itself by cultural mythopoetics that yoked its military and cultural rivals, the Romans and Jews into a transfiguring tragedy using the Hebraic matter of beneficent and purposeful providence, and an ethic of kindness to mark out a new pastoral (Bethlehem), apocalypse (crucifixion) and elegy (weeping for love) that ostensibly would end the vicious cycle of passion and horror in "a great mystery" which was but a revised form of the old mysteries complete with a triple goddess, eating the divine body and an abstract persona ficta, the "Holy Ghost" (Blake terms it "a vacuum") which in time hardens into the 'therapeutic State.'[76]

Guaranteeing cultural dynamism and instability, the new synthesis enshrined Hellenism's antinomian drive at the core of the West. This facilitated re-modeling and conversion and also served as an ideological and physical bludgeon against the Jews whose delineation of boundaries (the essence of Genesis 1 and the teaching of Moses) and instructions for good living in all aspects of life were reduced to "Law" and berated as punitive[77] (a transference from the Hellenes' relation to their own pitiless gods), cold and stern 'like the Jews' for whom forgiveness and compassion are primary attributes of the divine and human but which the cult of mercy denied them.[78] The new syncretism

also encoded at its core the cult of human sacrifice and apotheosis, the familiar theurgic poeisis of Greece and its pastoral-apocalyptic-elegiac-new pastoral eschaton: Herakles, Pentheus, Hippolytus or Oedipus must be dismembered, maimed or slain. In the new Hellenized appropriation of Judaism the divine being sacrifices his son in an analogy of Theseus' exile of Hippolytus, kills and transfigures him into a medium of new life which he chooses as Oedipus chose exile and Herakles the pyre. As for the Queen of heaven, Hera is changed from torturer of a son of god to a sweet embracer of him, that is, to an elegiac pastoral or pieta. All is forgiven, monstrous jealousies and goading goddesses are transformed into serious Niobe's. Just as the glittering illusions of art in time expose their horror, their vampiric relation to life, so the new lie exposes itself over time as the son and his 'spirit' kills the father and his law as made explicit in the works of Blake[79] and the cult of imagination and imagery (virtual reality, the Holy Ghost) generally. The god is a lamb (the god of Egypt) whose slaughter brings peace in a parody and appropriation of Pesach (the threshold between existential slavery and freedom including birth of a nation) whose people must be degraded or killed as the new fiction displaces life, as illusion displaces history and universalism an ancient nation. This change became the paradigm of postmodern education as conditioning. This magical poiesis takes away the sins of the world, if you believe it; everything becomes correctly compassionate by the ministrations of a 'therapeutic' world state into whose "general will" every one enter and "in their corporate capacity receive each member as an indivisible part of the whole": orgy-porgy,[80] Dionysus returns. Order and controlled vitality become not the chiaroscuro and complementarity of light and darkness but "the cold glare" of the State and its mandated illusions, ultimate Caesarism.

These cross-cultural contrasts, for seventeen centuries the West's intra-cultural conflict, are starkly revealed in the Hippolytus – Phaedra – Theseus triad (each of whom, as noted, is a vector for demonic divinity) and that of Joseph, Potiphar's wife and Potiphar, "a courtier of Pharaoh and chamberlain of the butchers" (Genesis 39). To adduce the tetrad of tragedy or its potential, one notes the contrast between the historical human Pharaoh and the mythical Amazon. The Hebrew story contains no aphrodisiacs or divine beings; no commitment of a youth to a virgin goddess; no gods or goddesses at all. The parents, grandparents and ancestors of Joseph all are human: indeed he is deeply concerned to re-unite and save his family. In Hebrew Scriptures, people do not project their passions or motives onto divine beings but act. The adulterous passion is a married woman's lust for a youth "handsome of form and handsome of appearance" who has skill, intelligence and grace: it is not the indirect punishment of the youth by a jealous goddess. Joseph refuses her overtures, is falsely accused, like Hippolytus but without the hysterics, suicide or curses, and jailed. Absent are the magical interpositions of perverse passions (love for a virgin goddess), divine fictions and their cycle of vengeance and transfiguration. Joseph's role as Potiphar's steward is no pastoral; his dramatic dealings with his brothers are not apocalyptic but a reconciling integration in which Judah, among others, plays a key role. He transforms events by insight and intelligence. Compare the plan Joseph skillfully pursues which depends largely on the response of

his brothers to the "artful cunning" of Daedalus and its results. In Genesis, the finale is a beginning, liberating and comedic; reunion of a family, paternal blessings, fraternal reconciliation, a people transformed into a "holy nation" very human, fallible but hopeful. There is no attempt to transform life into a cult of aesthetics; no "demand for beauty" realized in beast-god idols but an attempt to live rightly with a knowledge that includes humility in the face of the Eternal: and an injunction to remember not to dissolve in rapture. But the allure of magic proved stronger…

Pertinent to these contrasts is the image of Eros dripping the "sickness" of desire "down into [human] eyes" by the shafts of Aphrodite to which "neither fire nor the [light] of the stars is superior." Relevant to this image, a primary tenet of Judaism is to "guard your eyes" against any stimulation to lust, the essence of art, and against magic, forms of boundary transgression and the distinctions central to Judaism. The prohibition against conjuring, divination or use of puppet-like figures (idols) for fortune-telling is explained as a protection against those people and activities that "capture the eyes and steal the mind."[81] The wisdom of the warning pertains to the core Hellenic trauma (see the maze of Daedalus and the Minotaur, above, or the beautiful appearance of many personae-stars), its basis in seeing idea/images via erotic frenzy, the specific passage (525-42) cited above from *Hippolytus* and the glories of the culture of aesthetics generally.

It also is interesting, and a possible source of Hellenic borrowing that through his sons, Joseph has an "ox-like sovereignty." But this symbol of power neither presages nor refers to monstrous beings or bestiality *against which* Judaism defines itself. It simply foretells the fertility of his descendants and their triumphs, led by Joshua.[82] In short, history and reason ward off myth, image-weaving, cannibalism (figurative or literal) and madness, the transformative poeisis that distinguished other cultures from that of the Hebrews. Hebrew Scriptures have abundant drama and tragedies[83] but they are natural ones of history, circumstance and error, including passions but there is no fictive projection of these forces into a divine realm that makes fictions real and "wandering shadows" of human beings.[84] The foundational proscription of idol-worship (reified projections of emotion and an auto-erotic tie to them) by the Hebrews includes acceptance of responsibility for actions and real freedom rather than fate. The Hebrew Scriptures may be seen as a bulwark against the metamorphic, unstable and projective habits of mind and culture that result in punitive beast-gods, "eternal contradiction" and horror; that produce civilization from culture. The sense of clear boundaries and distinctions, perhaps the key cultural concepts in the Hebrew account of creation and entire Books of Moses may be essential for cultural and mental integrity.[85] Barring metamorphosis and its antinomian impulse, insisting on the Unity and incommensurability of the Creator and the logic of creation, Judaism separates the marital bed and all spheres of life from the passion play by which illusions eventually consume the lives that generate them leaving a Wasteland such as Theseus, Herakles, Arthur or Marlow inhabit at the end of their efforts at cultural reformation as "the realm reels back into the beast..." [86]

Images and profoundly moving theatrics, the West's fissionable substrate has been re-emerging in increasingly grandiose forms as the imperial transfiguration comes undone. The pastoral - apocalyptic – elegiac trajectory of poeisis repeats in ever more diverse and intense ways. The fictions now assert themselves in rhetorical and geopolitical forms as noted throughout this study and "embattled strictures against syncretism"[87] seem overwhelmed by its latest type: the "world-city" and multi-culturalism, the collapse of moral, national and economic boundaries. The term of art for this is "convergence," a synthesis of god and beast; the therapeutic totalitarianism of theosophy.[88] Tragedy and incomprehension have made a great and terrible comeback that Euripides would appreciate and that Nietzsche foretold and foresaw in Europe's "evening sky, burning now, perhaps burning itself out" in the friction of its Hellenic and Hebraic ground work.[89] One could denote the imperial ambition of Europe (the "expansive gaze"), of the West and its erotic spectaculars as the work of a culture whose "wits were crushed by a terrible disease of impious passion from Aphrodite" (*Hippolytus* 764-6). "So ends the play…" [90]

Notes and References

1 Euripides, *Hippolytus* 557-63 in *Euripides: Four Plays* (Focus Classical Library 2004, Edited with Notes & Introduction by Stephen Esposito; *Hippolytus* translation by Michael Halleran), 116, 1400, spoken by Artemis. The Esposito edition is used unless otherwise noted.

2 Goethe, *Faust, Part* I 2430 ff, 4190-4214 (NY 1965, translated by Charles E. Passage), 85-97, 146-7

3 Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy* (Cambridge University Press 1999, edited by Raymond Geuss & Ronald Speirs, translated by Ronald Speirs), 7 from Nietzsche's preface to the 2nd (1886) edition

4 Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: A Analysis of the Concept of Pollution & Taboo* (NY 1966)

5 *Nietzsche, The Birth of Tragedy & Other Writings* (Cambridge 1999, edited by Raymond Geuss & Ronald Speirs, translated by Ronald Speirs), 7, 26-8, passim; Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, "Skirmishes of an Untimely Man" sections 8-10 in *The Portable Nietzsche* (NY 1978, edited & translated by Walter Kaufmann), 518-21

6 As opposed to Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy* 17, 26 passim who associates order, Apollo, with image

7 Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West* (NY 1962 [abridged], Charles F. Atkinson translation), 24-40

8 Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols* op. cit.

9 *Oedipus the King* 1241-51, translation David Grene in *Sophocles I*, (University of Chicago Press 1954); compare to the final speech and suicide of Deianeira in her marital bed in *Women of Trachis* 912-31 (Jameson translation), a speech in which she repeatedly invokes her bridal chamber and bed; *The Birth of Tragedy* op. cit. 59

10 *The Birth of Tragedy* 44; Shelley, "Epipsychidion" 160-9

11 Euripides, *the Bacchae* 469-70, Arrowsmith translation; Esposito renders it, "face to face. He looked at me, I at him. And he gave me his sacred rites freely" and notes that the initiate doubles the initiator.

12 See note 9, above and *Oedipus the King* 1253-60, passim

13 Spengler op. cit 15 notes the theory of Joachim de Floris (1145-1202), 15; 24-40, 140-1

14 Matthew Arnold, "The Scholar Gypsy" (1853), 168, 203; Shelley, "The Triumph of Life" 47-73 passim

15 Nietzsche, "An Attempt at Self-Criticism" in Guess & Speirs, supra, 7; as I have shown, the effectual fusion of Aphrodite and hydra in *WT*, Nietzsche writes of "the synthesis of goat and god."

16 Sophocles, *the Women of Trachis* and Euripides, *Herakles*

17 Nietzsche, *The Birth of* Tragedy and *Twilight of the Idols* op. cit

18 *Oedipus the King* op cit 1258-61; "bellowing terribly, led by an invisible guide" the action suggests the close bond between Dionysus (both as a bull and a dissolver of limits) and Aphrodite, "Cypris the beguiling who crushes with desire," *Iphigenia in Aulis*" 1301-03. The schema applies well to *Hamlet* inter alia.

19 *The Birth of Tragedy*, 21, 25

20 ibid. 21, 44, 52, the image "has no place for the individual"

21 Euripides, *Herakles* 618-22, Theseus had gone to Hades to abduct Persephone. Herakles, sent there to drag out Kerberos the triple-bodied, "fifty-headed pitiless" dog-beast, rescued Theseus, establishing the friendship of the two great heroes. See Hesiod, *Theogony* 311-12 on Kerberos.

22 Euripides, *Herakles* 408-18, 1169-70, 1221-2 passim; see notes by translator Michael C. Halleran in Esposito, op. cit. page 164.

23 *Hippolytus* 1173-1248 passim

24 Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy* in Geuss & Speirs supra, 20-1

25 *Twilight of the Idols* section 23, *TPN* 528; *The Birth of Tragedy* 23, 21, 17 and "An Attempt at Self-Criticism," the Preface to the second edition of 1886, op. cit. 7

26 *Twilight of the Idols*, ibid & also see it at "The Problem of Socrates" section 8, *TPN* 477

27 Halleran, "the Hippolytus: an Interpretation" in *Euripides*, op. cit. 221 on the law of 450-1 bce

28 *The Birth of Tragedy* 23, 25-30

29 *Hippolytus* 1143-1278

30 Ibid. 106, 113

31 Ibid. 24, 30, 35 are the first of many references to Athens. The father of Theseus is Aegeus or, less often cited, Poseidon. The shared inference is his generation by ocean and air (his mother, Aethra).

32 Spengler op. cit. 140, "The Arts of Form"; *Theogony* 924-9 on birth of Athena

33 *Hippolytus* 30-1, *Theogony* 159-210

34 *Hippolytus* 1423-30

35 Ibid. 1400, 1301-04

36 Euripides *the Bacchae* 810-46, 912-72 passim, Esposito translation; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* (Indiana University Press, R. Humphries translation 1955), Book 10, tale 1: "his love was given to young boys only...'enjoy that springtime, take those first flowers,'" Orpheus retorts to the Thracian women.

37 I use the word "polluted" here as defined by Mary Douglas, "matter out of place," ambiguous in relation to its culture.

38 Ibid. page 96 note to verses 61-87; cf. Robert Frost's poem, "Mowing" or Roethke's "I Knew a Woman"

39 Euripides, *Iphigenia in Aulis* 1284-1310, cf. "The audience in the shepherd's hut" (hut of Paris) cited in *the Iliad* Book 24. Paris/Alexander had a doom like Oedipus and also destroyed his city; Aphrodite has a key role in each process, complementing that of "the dark singer, the Sphinx" 391-2 whose counterpart is doubled in Calchas and Cassandra.

40 Hesiod, *Theogony* 280-329 (University of Michigan Press 1973, Lattimore translation), pages 140-42; both the Sphinx and Hydra are descended from Echidna, "half a nymph, half a monstrous serpent" like other hybrid beasts, tropes of transfiguration and image-work.

41 *Hippolytus* op cit, 337-9 and see introduction by Esposito, 19-22; Hesiod, *Theogony* 947-9 on Ariadne and Dionysus.

42 *Hippolytus* op. cit. and Ovid, *Metamorphoses* Book II, last tale and III, continued in tale of Kadmos.

43 *The Birth of Tragedy* 21

44 *The Birth of Tragedy* 17-21, Nietzsche commenting on Schopenhauer

45 *The Bacchae* 100-01, 618, 920-22, 1017, 1159 inter alia, Esposito translation

46 *The Birth of Tragedy* 59

47 *The Bacchae* 470

48 See Spengler op. cit. 12, note 5 on Europe as embodied fiction

49 *Theogony,* 120-2, 188-206, 933-7, inter alia

50 *Hippolytus* 26-57, 131 passim; for erotic passion as "sickness" see *the Women of Trachis* 446, 553 etc

51 Sophocles, *the Women of Trachis* 498-516 (University of Chicago 1957, 1969, Jameson translation); *Hippolytus* 1268-81

52 Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilization* (Boston, Beacon Press 1955), 56-7; on the fracturing effects of psycho-analysis via analogy to "Biblical Criticism" see Israel Eldad, *The First Tithe* (Tel Aviv 2008, translated by Zev Golan; initial Hebrew edition 1950), 242-3.

53 Herman Melville, *Billy Budd, Sailor* chapters 17-18, 11-12; Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, 17-46, 54 inter alia; see also *Twilight of the Idols* "Peoples and Fatherlands" sections 8-10, inter alia.

54 Sophocles op. cit. 498-516

55 Ibid. 440-8, 458-67

56 Ibid. 831-40

57 *Hippolytus* 1173-1248, 1355-60, the horses destroy him as Actaeon is torn apart by his own hounds and Pentheus by his mother, Agave, aunts and subjects. This is the Dionysian-psychoanalytical tearing, the splitting and then the dissolution of the individual engaged in elaboration and worship of an eidolon which may be the self as projected in coordination with a "psycho-analyst," the modern, 'rational' Dionysus

58 *Hippolytus* 885-98 946-55

59 *Metamorphoses* X, tales 7-10, quoting the end of the last tale, Humphries translation, 257-8; *Hippolytus* 1416-31 for the death and transfiguration of Hippolytus into a cultic site for the passage from maidenhood to marriage. cf. Metamorphoses X, 1 and XI, 1

60 Ibid. Book X, 251-52, 257-8

61 Ibid. 241-53 "The Story of Pygmalion," "Cinyras and Myrhha" and "the Story of Adonis"

62 Hesiod, *Theogony* 158-210

63 Panchaia may be a bi-lingual contraction of "all life" or "all living beings," see Genesis 2:7

64 *Poly-pragmosyne*, Esposito, op cit, 8-11, cf. Spengler 28, 82-3, cf. Pericles' "we have forced an entry into every sea and every land…" *The Peloponnesian War*, II. 41 (NY 1954, Rex Warner translation)

65 Shelley, "Lines on the Medusa" represents this in the "unending involutions" of the viper-hair of the Medusa who has the power of engraving her character into the heart of any viewer, including God as she "gazes in death on heaven…"

66 *Metamorphoses* Book VII, tales 1-2, Humphries pages 181-90

67 Ibid.

68 Mark Harris, 1994 http://web.org.uk/picasso/harlequin.html and a more extended piece in 1995-6, http://web.org.uk/picasso/secret_guernica.html

69 Geuss & Speirs 22, note 37;

70 The schema shows that the human tetrad of trauma contains two triangles, basic stuff of erotic pollution and also, as its image or reflection, a trio of gods that contain the opposed doublings of Aphrodite-Artemis and of the bull and horse.

71 *The Bacchae* 912-22, passim, another murder-suicide of the host's image of the host; *The Birth of Tragedy* 59, 52 and note 76

72 *Theogony* 206

73 *Hippolytus* 215-30; emphasis added

74 *Birth of Tragedy*, op. cit. 21

75 *Hippolytus* 1415, 1441

76 Rousseau, *The Social Contract* chapter 7, "The Sovereign"; William Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven & Hell* (1790), plate 6

77 The mockery appears in Symbolist and world-socialism advocate H.G. Wells, *The Island of Dr. Moreau* where the "Sayer of the Law" is a hybrid orangutan, chapter 12 passim

78 Exodus 34:5-7; mercy is emphatically denied to Jews in the "Perceval" section of Chretien's *Sangreal*: "the wicked Jews whom we should kill like dogs…damned themselves and saved us" Chretien wrote in the formative decades of Christian Europe. *Arthurian Romances* (NY 1991, William Kibler translation), 458

79 Blake, *Milton, a Poem*, plate 15 in which the imagination, "the eternal divine humanity" strangles Urizen ("your reason") or Nobodaddy (nobody's daddy) who clutches his tablets of law.

80 Rousseau, op. cit. Part VI, "The Social Compact" & Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World* the Dionysian rite celebrated, aptly enough, at the "Aphroditaeum."

81 Maimonides, *Sefer HaMitzvoth* – "Book of the Commandments" — (Moznaim 1993, translation Shraga Silverstein), negative commandment # 32

82 Deuteronomy 33:17

83 F or example, the initial fearful refusal to enter the Land (Numbers 13-14 ff) and its consequences

84 Sophocles, *Ajax* 126 (University of Chicago Press 1957, John Moore translation)

85 Douglas, *Purity & Danger* on Leviticus; *In the Wilderness* (Sheffield 1993) and *Leviticus as Literature* (Oxford 1999); this became a leitmotif of her work. Also see Gerald Schroeder, *The Science of God: the Convergence of Modern Science & Biblical Wisdom* (NY 1997)

86 Tennyson, *Idylls of the King*, "the Last Tournament" 125; "the Passing of Arthur" 25-6; on the absolute Unity of the ineffable Creator (source of the 'big-bang') see Maimonides, "Foundations of Torah" 1: 1-12

87 John F. A. Sawyer, editor, *Reading Leviticus: Conversations with Mary Douglas* (Sheffield Academic Press 1996), 162-3; the link between idol worship and goddess cults brought in by foreign wives is exemplified in the parentage and fate of Hippolytus and his self-castrating affiliation with Artemis. His denunciations of women (616-78), prompted by the frenzied passion of his step-mother and inherent in his maternal heritage and ambiguous tie to Artemis, if extreme includes an awareness of this form of unsettling a house, a realization also dramatized in *the Bacchae*, the *Agamemnon* and *the Women of Trachis* and many other tales. But the Hellenic orientation to the 'spectacular' that *to see* is a process of image-weaving presided over by Dionysus, the breaker of all boundaries and source of tragedy trumped all efforts, — or desires – to contain the passion play and the tragic transfigurations in which Aphrodite, Athena and Artemis play so seminal a part.

88 Alice Bailey, "Seed Groups in the New Age," July 1937 inter alia, a process of group-thought and "coordination" of the group mind by psychologists and "helpers."

89 Nietzsche, *Beyond Good & Evil*, Part 8, "Peoples & Fatherlands" sections 248-50 (NY 1966, translation and commentary by Walter Kaufmann), 187-8, cf. *The Gay Science*, Book V section 343

90 *The Bacchae*, last line, William Arrowsmith translation (University of Chicago Press 1959, editors David Grene and Richmond Lattimore)

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Joseph Roth (1894-1939) : Between Reportage and Fiction

LEON YUDKIN

The Scope of his Vision

The writer, Joseph Roth, as a character in his own work, is plunged and plunges himself into the maelstrom of action, as observer, as active participant, as well as reporter and author. These borderlines are crossed constantly as the typical Roth fiction shifts between first person narrative and external observation. The author can be both his own created character and a detached onlooker as well. He can also sometimes be the omniscient narrator. He also makes no clear distinction between reportage and fiction, as both genres are expected to be true to life. In this he departs, in his own view, from the so-called *neue Sachlichkeit*, the new objectivity, which was emerging in German letters during this phase. This movement, despite its prestige in striving for unalloyed objectivity, is attacked by Roth in a series of articles, which claim that documentary writing (OK!) is being confused with the merely artless (not so good).[1] For him, this is a crossover with a careful regard for precision, truthfulness and quality.

So the Roth hero faces mighty changes, and he has to resolve these by some sort of adjustment. One of the distinguishing features of Roth's writing is his inclusiveness, his comprehensive coverage of human types. This marks both his reportage and his fiction. And his own life is of a piece with his writing. His great friend, chronicler and editor, Hermann Kesten, notes that he was an Austrian in the broadest sense, associated with the old Austro-Hungarian dual monarchy, with the blend of peoples, cultures, intertwined memories and multiplicity of languages.[2] He was a world citizen by inclination as well as background.[3] But this was qualified by his regular stance of being in flight and his constant search for the 'other', a condition that was injected into his characters. He takes on many masks, and these, in fun and in earnest, can quickly merge or morph.

Roth's Fiction

His first novel, *The Spider's Web*[4], sets the tone for his early fiction, staging his favoured setting, the situation following the Great War in Central Europe. His central character is a demobbed lieutenant, Theodor Lohse, a victim of the German revolution, who is possessed by a fear of conspiracy, a sense of danger that he pins on the 'Jewish threat'. We have here the pendulum swing of the action in Roth's narrative; the shift between war and peace, for the hero the transition from a fixed and predictable framework of employment to the freedom from that discipline, which leads to uncertainty and ennui. The character is cast on his own resources, and he has to discover the kernel of his own being, and through that some sort of direction. Lohse's frustration at his own pointless existence and sense of failure leads him into an ambiguous life of search for meaning in just hitting out in all directions, with no regard for consequences.

Fiction can see this from the inside, and a narrative presents all types in this way. It is the analysis of the psychic background that can make the course of his career comprehensible and communicable. The two genres, reportage and fiction, have their own rules, and we see both the advantages and the danger of fiction over straightforward reporting. The latter has to stick to the external and the observable, that is, to the exterior, and thus falsifiable fact; the test to be applied to it is empirical. The presentation has to be fluid, fluent and gripping. Roth certainly strove to attain the highest standard in the enterprise, although his reliability as a prophet, when he ventured beyond dry observation, might well be held to account.[5]

In any case, the picture of a Berlin attempting to accommodate itself to a grisly post-war situation grips the reader, achieving that through an assemblage of portraits, both in this first novel and in successive fictions. Here, Lohse is fairly typical; a man undistinguished intellectually and spiritually, now, as a retired officer, out of his time and place. The narrator attempts to grasp the phenomenon of Fascist aspiration in his principal character, who adopts a distorted version of patriotic nostalgia. The reader has to understand how one might take on two identities, as well as turn into a savage killer. It is his paradoxical colleague, the Jew, Benjamin Lenz, who characterises him thus: '…grim and cowardly, gross and cunning, ambitious and insatiable, greedy and frivolous…He was the young man of Europe; nationalistic, self-seeking, devoid of belief and loyalty, bloodthirsty and blinkered. This was the new Europe.[6] The novel is riotous, devastating and random. But it is Lohse who is finally outmanoeuvered and abandoned by his associate, Lenz, who takes all the money and leaves the country.

The Speaker as Narrator

That the author can also adopt the position of first person narrator we see in another early Roth novel, *Hotel Savoy*.[7] Here, he assumes the role of one of the active participants, Gabriel Dan, narrator from within, relating the fortunes of the eponymous hero of the work the Savoy hotel itself. But the speaker here is also multi-faceted. He had been a soldier, and is now a civilian. He had been a Russian, and he is now apparently assuming the guise of a West European, a status to which he aspires. He faces two ways, as he still retains within himself the old instincts and that capacity for violence and adherence to a rigid, militaristic discipline. Indeed the basic lineaments of this character, as with so many Roth figures throughout his fiction, bears remarkable similarity to the author's own biographical profile.

The adoption of the hotel as not only the locus of the action but as its very essence, suggests the hotel as synecdoche for the whole action. A hotel suggests temporality, and can be contrasted with the notion of home. The author's life pattern suggests lack of home. He was born in Brody, a fact which he seems to want to hide, and

does not mention in his own account of his life. Brody is a small town which he left early in life, and to which he never returned. He then lived, always temporarily and sometimes sporadically, in various different countries and places, always of a temporary nature, and he ended his short life in another town altogether, in the Paris which he loved so much. But he lived still more or less as though a temporary visitor staying in a hotel. The Savoy hotel of the novel presents as a locus, well aware of its fragile existence; it serves not a longed for haven but rather as a temporary refuge. Its metaphorical nature is not solely spatial, relating to the place situated, but also temporal. Thus we are led to view it as an area in time between wars (although of course Roth did not live to witness World War Two) as well as an indeterminate place in national terms. There is a plasticity of character, so that the same person passing through changes in situation as well as in age, seems to face in different and sometimes opposite directions. The situation is dynamic, as is the history pictured, based on actuality. For the narrator, the hotel can seem to become a home, although that can change quite suddenly.[8] The national locus is unnamed, though indubitably Central European. But there are also quasi-mythical elements intervening within the naturalistic scenario. The people within the hotel all await a certain Bloomfield, due to arrive from America. So this man acquires the status of a kind of messiah, who will effect a degree of fulfilment and possibly redemption. In the meantime, the feeling of homelessness grows, and the major aspiration of the teller of the story is not to feel isolated. He must be part of a collective. Towards the end of the tale, he confesses: 'I am part of the homecoming soldiers.'[9] The climax is total disintegration. Fighting breaks out, as does the raging fire that consumes the hotel.

In Flight

The most comprehensive document detailing Roth's own account of his life is a letter written to his publisher, Gustav Kiepenheuer on that man's fiftieth birthday, although the translator, Michael Hofmann, who records this is somewhat sceptical in regard to its veracity in literal detail, though accurate in feeling.[10] Roth wrote: 'Nowhere, in no church record or parish register, is my name entered, or the date of my birth. I feel at home in myself, but otherwise I have no home.' (10 June 1930). The novel, *Flight without End*, he regarded as '…substantially autobiography, and he identified himself with its central figure, Lieutenant Tunda.'[11] The only Foreword that he ever wrote for any of his novels appears here, where he asserts that he invents nothing about his '…friend, comrade and spiritual associate, Franz Tunda…I have invented nothing, made up nothing…Observed fact is all that counts.'

So in this novel, he was being truthful but not artless. Tunda is a version of the author, accurately recorded and represented. It is paradoxical though that whilst what we have seems to be a standard *Heimkehrroman*, he carries with him perpetually a sense of homelessness. Tunda, like the author himself, has not really found his home, despite his apparent return home. A first lieutenant in the Austrian army (Roth too had volunteered to serve in 1916), he was taken as a Russian prisoner of war. Then he was saved by a Pole, so he learnt Polish and took on the surname of his saviour, Baranowicz. He then inclined

towards Buddhism, but later, by default, he joined the ranks of the Russian revolutionaries, just after he had distanced himself from that outlook and ideology. He took the devoted insurrectionist, Natasha, as a lover, and acquired the tools to work as a revolutionary propagandist and writer. But what he writes is his own reference point and compass, and that charts his position.

In a letter to the narrator/author (referred to directly as Roth), Tunda treats the question of why he left Russia, and whether he felt 'at home' there. Unable to reply unequivocally, he says that he is 'between resignation and expectation'.[12] He still feels a stranger, and we may tend to conclude that this derives from the fact that he feels a stranger everywhere, that this is inherent to his consciousness. After the gradual realisation that he was penniless, without a profession, without a lover, without prospects or ambition, and, overall, without any drive, belief or even a sense of being, he comes to the conclusion, in the last words of the novel, that: 'No one in the whole world was as superfluous as he.' Indeed, this seems to be not only the most autobiographical and confessional of the Roth novels, but also the ultimate in a dark pessimism.

Life and Literature

Although Roth was a successful and fulfilled writer, also publicly recognised and much in demand, his personal life was always in tatters. He was not able to impose control over his physical decline, his physical decline, his alcoholism and his relationships. So he died young and in a state of poverty and neglect, also in despair at the prospect of a Europe hurtling towards disaster. He also wove many fanciful fictions around his own biography, disguising his origins and his current situation, and producing various and contradictory accounts of his life story.

This is the case too for the people in the fiction that he produced. These waver between contrasting poles, creating tension and uncertainty. We have seen how the shift is pictured in his fiction, in his lead characters who could change direction (often imposed by external factors), and face two ways. Roth's opus could also change direction in tendency. Fictions very close to political and biographical reality could be replaced *also* by fables, such as in his novel, *Job* [13]. A later work, *Weights and Measures*[14] also bears the marks of a fable. That the author was happy with it can be seen in what he writes to his translator, to whom he wrote whilst the work was in progress. At that time he was living in Paris, which beloved city he chose as his place of residence following the Nazi takeover in Germany: 'Je travaille, mon roman sera bon, je crois, plus parfait que ma vie.[15] It seems that he regarded his written work as the idealised expression of himself that he was unable to achieve in his own living arrangements.

The author strikes up the tone of fable rather than the narrative of reportage by the simple device of opening the story with the traditional childlike introit of 'Once upon a time', in order to introduce his principal character, Anselm Eibenschütz. This man had previously been a soldier, a non commissioned officer. Now his new appointment reveals him as the epitome of honesty and probity. But his overwhelming sensation is of extreme isolation, and he regrets his resignation from the army, which had been brought about by

pressure from his wife, now increasingly unloved and resented. Now he has lost his old comprehensible and graspable framework. His loveless marriage accentuates his loneliness, which has to operate in tandem with his uncompromising honesty. The atmosphere of the commercial operation of the town is inimical towards him. The merchants are scoundrels, and they resent and hate the new appointee. Particularly hostile of course were the criminals, such as Leibusch Jadlowker, known as 'Leibusch the Lawless'. His chief clerk, Josef Nowak, has an affair with his wife, who then gives birth to a son by him. In his profession, he is squeezed between the demands of justice, which he is determined to uphold, and the feelings of sympathy for the unfortunate, and particularly for a pathetic Jewess. He himself is of Jewish descent.

We are here in border country, with an abundance of international crime, people smuggling, illegal trade. This is the sort of area in which such as Jadlowker, master criminal, can flourish. Soon, Anselm gets involved not only with him, but with one of his alluring mistresses, and he is faced with a renewed quandaries, the tension between his instincts and his own ethic. None of this makes for contentment. He is an even more divided soul. And, through extreme internal distress, he reaches a state of epiphany, a sudden realisation of reality. He wants to do the right thing, whereas he had hitherto been acting wrongly. But first he acknowledges his love for Euphemia, at the inn, the centre of crime on the border. She however is in love with Sameschkin, who visits her regularly in the winter, and this fills Anselm with an overpowering jealousy. His love turns to hate, which then overwhelms him. His own personal state seems to herald general disaster, and disease, the dreaded cholera, ravages the area. Disaster is heaped on disaster. He hears that his wife son has died, that she too is mortally sick, and so he returns home. His nemesis, Jadlowker, escapes from jail, and returns under another name. Anselm is being transformed. But the transformation only leads to his own demise, and eventually Jadlowker gets his man in a repetition of the murderous crime for which he is notorious. Anselm is finished, and no one cares. Eventually, the cholera also passes, and spring arrives. The novel is a tragedy, but that life elsewhere continues regardless is recorded as part of the total picture.

His epiphany had led not to redemption, as had been the case in the original understanding of the concept[16], but rather to a recognition of his actual failure. His decisions had been misplaced. His change of career had been inappropriate. His marriage was wrong. His probity had been compromised, and he had been shunted by an overpowering desire for a woman whose heart was elsewhere. He had been a good man, but was eventually derailed. The picture of this personal failure was rounded off by the narrator's sense of an uncaring exterior, which is seen to be indifferent and so uncaring. We can then see what Roth means by his novel (in the process of completion) being better than his life, in this sketch of Eibenschütz and of that man's miserable life.

Politics and Life

Roth's fiction is concerned with public life, but more particularly, with the way that public life, the changing space inhabited, the power constellations, the economic and

social circumstances inhabited, impacted on the individual. However significant the external forces may be, it is the individual space that always lies at the centre of the narrative. This is the case too in those works which treat the public sphere, the world of politics, most overtly.

The Silent Prophet[17] is a case in point. It was not published in the author's lifetime, and the manuscript turned up much later. According to the author's own Prologue, it is based on '…a definite, historically existing personality', whose identity he wanted to disguise. The book is probably the one referred to in the correspondence as the 'Trotsky novel', and it has been assumed that Tunda, the central character, is based on Trotsky. But what concerns the author, whoever may be the historical model, is that the truth be told, without adornment or invention. He adds that the lesson to be learnt from this presentation of the truth is that '…the individual is always defeated in the end.' Just as it is clear that Roth is an accurately documentary type writer, whose brief goes well beyond documentation, so he is a political writer, whose work demonstrates the important lesson that the individual is what matters, and that he always emerges as the loser. This is another aspect of his narrative crossover.

But this novel cannot seriously aspire to be regarded as a totally objective account. It does not stay on the outside and observe facts. It enters the consciousness of the characters, especially of the lead actor, Tunda, and so we have a scenario set by an omniscient narrator, who can and does tell us what is going on in the mind of the players. We learn not only about Tunda's background and physical appearance, not only about the observable facts, but also of his thoughts, aspirations, and the masks that he dons to acclimatise himself to the world around and to his changing circumstances.

Roth himself referred to this work as the "Trotsky novel".[18] The narrator is both the observer and recorder. He declares that he will not enquire into the personal motives of his characters. 'We must content ourselves with a description of certain events,' he asserts.[19] The action shifts between countries, and he goes to unspecified borderlands, in fact, to familiar Roth territory. But he is then arrested and taken back to Russia, which at that stage was still under the Tsar, in the dying years of that regime. He is imprisoned. Then he shifts in ideology, if not in ultimate act. He says of his past: 'We were ideologists, not human beings.'[20] The outbreak of war loosens the grip of Tsarist power and he manages to escape, and again to cross the border. His citizenship is uncertain, and he is aware of that wavering public identity: 'People, as one knows, had all become shadows of their documents.'[21] A further crossing point is blurred as the Russian revolutionaries now see themselves as natural allies of the Central Powers, as both want the downfall of the Tsar. But he writes to his beloved, Hinde, that he is unwilling to fight for Kaiser and Emperor, so he will not volunteer for service. Rather, he will save himself for a better war'[22] He prepares himself to fight for the revolution, to go back to Russia, although, as he says, Russia is not his country. There comes the struggle between Nationalism and the international ideology of Communism.

In Switzerland where he stayed for a while, pacifists and deserters merged. The neutral space allowed for an extension of the view of the picture from the outside. But back in Russia, where his target lay, he became increasingly an ardent partisan and exponent of the revolutionary cause. Why? 'He conducted his own view. He had a personal account to settle with the world.'[23] If he is a demagogue, as is suggested to him, then he is a demagogue who believes every word he says. He acquires a world- wide reputation as a bloody executioner.

The plot takes an unexpected turn, as Friedrich's letter of departure to his beloved Hinde of so many years previous, suddenly reaches her after the war's end. Simultaneously, Friedrich is advised to leave the country, presumably because of the pessimistic tone of his discourse. He takes up his role in a different form, as a revolutionary agitator from the heart of the great revolution. But he tells himself (how does the narrator, the objective outsider, relating only the observable fact know this?) that he does not '…believe in the success of the revolution'.[24] The principal source of his malaise is his feeling of homelessness. He travels around, from one country to another, and then he re-establishes contact with Hinde. Their love is rekindled, and they resolve to remain together. But he is then summoned back to Moscow, where he is received by his old comrade, Sevilli, now in supreme authority.[25] Shifted to some anonymous spot, Friedrich is once again in a kind of exile. Here, it is said that the old solitude offers every pleasure. And so he wanders off on the 'fringes of pleasures, follies and sorrows' (final words of the novel).

Roth was considerably preoccupied by the political scene, even if he considered it, through his characters, to be secondary to his picture of character. That also manifests itself as the material for his work. The material is explicit in the novel, *Right and Left*[26]. Here we have a first person narrator, but one who is discreetly in the background, who tells the story of two brothers and their progress through life, and, as suggested by the title, represent two separate political poles. The opposing ideologies correspond to the two rampant ideologies that attracted violent supporters and opponents, and which played themselves out in their most extreme form in the political scene that was to emerge in the wake of the Great War. This is typical Joseph Roth territory, the ideological surface over the dramatis personae, and the manner in which these individuals would respond to the changing circumstances attendant. That the specific ideology selected is secondary to the character and that character's psyche and inner development we see from his contrast of the two apparent opposites, Left and Right. Both "systems" repress individuality and resolve themselves into absolutist dictatorships.

The story is told of two brothers, Paul and Theodor Bernheim. A good deal of background analysis is provided to introduce the story line. The two brothers grow up in a medium sized German town, and the elder, the favoured son, is old enough to enlist in the Great War effort. Paul grows up as (initially) a quiet lad, talented, ambitious, arrogant and hugely egoistic. Theodor is less distinguished, and feels deep resentment at his position as a second best. The account first concentrates on Paul, who is initially

educated in Oxford, England. He seems to be cut out for a distinguished career, but his ambitions are thwarted by the outbreak of hostilities. After a brief experience of the fighting, for which he had opted as a passionate patriot, he suddenly turns into a pacifist. Later, he again reverses his position, joins up again , is wounded, but survives. Theodor, on the other hand, was too young for military service, but he later joins a Nazi secret society. This young man is filled with envy and hatred, both for his brother and for all his other imagined enemies, including his mother. Paul's life post war moves into the doldrums, as he does not seem to be able to fulfil his early promise, not in politics, not in the arts, and not in commerce.

Theodor needs Paul's help, but he hates him. Indeed they hate each other. That is the personal bit. In the public sphere: 'Extremist demonstrations in the streets became more frequent.'[27] The situation was degenerating day by day, and sinister forces were at work, undermining normal interactions. This novel of apparent ideological divisions is in reality a tale of social disintegration and the obliteration of personal character. There is a picture presented of the post war decline in Europe, and a power that overrides the pawns playing out the game of political life. It is clear that the narrator does not have a high opinion of Paul (his principal character, the "hero"), as he writes that there is very little to be said of him except that he had not changed. A life of promise eviscerated! There is however a potential source of redemption, and in this case the name of that quasi messianic figure is Nikolai Brandeis, an operator from the East. This mysterious figure seems to have his hand in many pies, and perhaps he could help Paul, who is near bankruptcy. For all his long standing promise, it seems that Paul had never really had a grasp of finance, and the rather snide characterisation of him confirms the narrator's low opinion of the real value of his superficial gifts.

Paul marries into money, a woman named Ingmar Endes, daughter of the richest man in Germany. Through that marriage, he also gets support from Brandeis, as the union seemed to offer so much promise, so it looks from the outside as though all his dreams have been fulfilled. But though he is now so prosperous, he cannot enjoy his wealth. The novel concludes with the unexplained disappearance of Brandeis who is never seen again. He too had been deeply frustrated. His entry into a 'new world' is heralded, by the narrator, but that is not explained and may be a piece of ironic speculation. Like so many novels of Joseph Roth, the ending here breaks off the sequential narrative, and then wavers in a world of fading light. If there is the possibility of something new, it has not been crystallised. This tendency is perhaps why many readers find Roth's endings unsatisfactory The plots and problems suggested are unresolved, and in fact probably viewed as unresolvable. They act as the author's kind of truth in the world which the writer endeavours to reproduce in fiction, his truth writing. He aspires to represent what he sees as actuality, which for the reader of fiction may seem unsatisfactory, not rounded off.

Looking Back for the Future

Roth's magnum opus, in the literal sense of length as well as being his most important and polished work, is *The Radetzky March*.[28] The foundation figure of the

novel, the first Trotta of the three generations covered within the span of the novel's coverage, Captain Joseph Trotta von Sipolje, received his distinguished title, including the honorofic 'von', for the part that he played in the Battle of Solferino. Roth here uses historical material explicitly. Solferino was the locus of this decisive conflict, where the Italians launched an attack against the might of the Austrian army The battle was fought on 24 June 1859, and was conducted by the Italians in a bid to achieve unification and eventual independence against the might of Austria, although led by the French Emperor. That Trotta himself challenged the accuracy of the reports that were given out relating to the part that he himself played did not mitigate from the mythical status that he achieved as a great hero, worthy of all possible gratitude and honour. He was thus immortalised in the school books. It is for this that the name of Trotta became known to successive generations, and for which his descendants also received the credit. It was thought that Trotta had saved the life of the Emperor, the legendary Franz Joseph. This awareness penetrates future generations, so that even the grandson, Carl Joseph, also feels a special affinity with the Habsburgs.

This memory and the nostalgia for the glory days of Empire constitute the thrust of this book, as well as it does in much of Roth's work overall. The Emperor in later days may still be there, and he was to remain in place until 1916, but both his control and his efficacy were manifestly weakening in the face of ascendant local national feelings and resentment. However, central power was inevitably diminishing, the figure of the Emperor, accompanied regularly by the strains of Strauss's Radetzky March, still bestrode the huge extent of the Empire, even in its sunset days: 'The Emperor Francis Joseph was scattered a hundred-thousandfold, throughout the length and breadth of his Empire, omnipresent among his people as God is omnipresent in the world.'[29]:

There are two ways of looking at the Empire, both when it was in its prime and when it was at its last gasp. But there is also a third way of observing it, and that is in its historical context, from the point of the present, many years later. For all the prophecies, struggles and predictions of earlier times, we might still ask ourselves whether change, dramatic and decisive as it has been, has made for a better world. The reply must be decidedly negative. This is the basis for the tone of nostalgia; a looking back to more secure and better days. Roth himself had been a rebel, then a soldier. Then he shifted to pacifism and supported revolution. But he became increasingly cool about its implementation and its prospects. The writer also witnessed other forces, counter forces indeed. But everything seemed to work against the survival of the individual mind. And it was this element of mind that was being defeated. The tone of this great novel is indeed nostalgic. It is as if the wild revolutionary has gone conservative. He had realised that much could and should be reformed and even reshaped, but the process involved and the consequences of that change seemed to be worse than what was being replaced. So his political stance wavered, His personal life was awry too, but so was the state of the world. Perhaps indeed the two were intertwined.

Trotta was buried with the inscription on his headstone, 'Hero of Solferino', and so his immortality seemed to be assured. His son however was to become a civil servant,

not a military man. He had from childhood on though '…felt in some small measure akin to the Habsburgs, whose power his father represented and was here to uphold, and for whom he himself would some day be ordered to battle, and to death.[30] The easiest death of all came to the accompaniment of the Radetzky March. That piece of music came to stand for the whole institution of the Empire, the Emperor, and for all that glorious past.

The story moves on to chart the course of the life of the grandson too, and that occupies the bulk of the novel, shifting towards the present time. This Trotta is a lieutenant in the army. But, as we see him through his own eyes, he seems so worthless that he scarcely exists as a self-contained entity. He is really no one in himself: 'He lived in his grandfather's reflected glory, that was it. He was the grandson of the hero of Solferino: the only grandson.'[31] He feels increasingly worthless, although he does not want to engage in the duel which has been brought on by his dalliance with the wife of a comrade. This was in fact an indirect insult, as it was the other man, who was abused by someone else. When the husband of his lover, the doctor of Jewish descent Demant feels that he has to defend his honour, and so face death, perhaps it, following the age old army code, had to be incumbent on Trotta to challenge the abuser. But Trotta feels that that would constitute just another pointless death, so he simply escaped the scene, and the army altogether. Death becomes as pointless as life. And it is all so different from the era of his grandfather. Life has degenerated into meaninglessness. In the absurd duel that takes place, in fact both contestants die, and Trotta leaves the regiment.

Part Two of the novel moves Eastward with the hero. In these primitive regions preparations were already afoot for what was assumed to be the forthcoming war. The dominant figure in the town where Trotta is billeted is Count Chojnicki. This aristocrat constantly forecasts the demise of the monarchy. Our novelist may have been deeply nostalgic for the past glories, but the narrative is acutely aware of its fragile and deteriorating fabric, as presented by the figures therein. Trotta the third was in tune with the prophecies of doom rampant. Rebellion was sprouting throughout the various ethnic groups, and there was revolution brewing. This was so in the Austrian heartland too, and we read about the two generations of Trotta in the centre of Empire and in the borderlands. The District Commissioner decides to go to visit his son at his new residence. So we can see the decrepit Empire in its entirety, all falling apart. The father and the son, the last of the Trottas (as the Lieutenant describes himself in his own words) are the guests of the Count, who regales them with a forecast of the imminent finale, the end of Empire. Of course, the father can not entertain such a possibility, but for the son, this is a reality. The encounter between father and son and the recognition of ultimate reality has a pathetic quality. The son says, as though this is an awful confession, that he can not forget anything that had constituted the backdrop to his existence. So he is stuck in the past. The father seeing this and also witnessing the distress which this seems to induce, now understands that not only is he himself isolated, but that that the two of them are both desperately alone. He is however recalled back home before he can do anything to alleviate his son's mental state.

Borderlands is not just an incidental location in Roth's narrative. It is also a synecdoche of the novel as a whole, for the narrator's state of mind, and for the placement of his narrative. The author crosses ideologies as he crosses geographical borders, and as the shape of history is recast. And so his moods and sympathies seem to shift, entering his characters' minds and altering stances.

Part Two had fulfilled its function in its presentation of a picture of the aging Emperor facing an empty future. Part Three concludes the novel. Nations are arising in the Empire and challenging its authority. The District Commissioner though disputes the existence of such entities as nations. For him, it was the Czechs who had invented this label, whereas he himself viewed such so-called nations as bunches of rioters.[32] In the meantime, he receives word that his son intends to leave the army. We see collapse everywhere.

But Trotta still has to resolve the problem of an enormous debt that he owes to the dubious operator, Kapturak. He turns to his father, who in turn, in desperation, goes to the Emperor himself. After all, he has to redeem the honour of the Trottas who saved the Emperor's life. This bid is successful, but an even more significant matteer intervenes, and disrupts party celebrations, here and presumably elsewhere. News has come through of the assassination at Sarajevo of the heir to the throne. Trotta confirms his resignation from the army to his father, reporting too that the whole army had deserted. But, following the outbreak of hostilities, he is killed by the enemy. And for the father, who then hears of the incident, that is the end too. The Epilogue presents the facts of the last days of what turns out to be the last Trotta. His own death coincides with the death of the Emperor, who, as it were, could not survive the end of the Trottas. But neither could survive the end of Austria, as it had been constituted and conceived.

Notes and References

[1] See the introduction by Michael Hofmann, written in September 1983, to an English version of *Flight without End* (*Die Flucht ohne Ende*, 1927).

[2] *Joseph Roth, Werke*; Herausgegeben und eingeleiten von Hermann Kesten, 1975. Vol.1. Vorwort, 1956, p.12.

[3] Ibid.p.15.

[4] *Das Spinnennetz*, 1923.

[5] Two collections of his reportage have been made available. One is a collection of his vignettes of Jewish life, *Juden auf Wanderschaft,* 1927 and 1937, translated as *The Wandering Jews*, 2001. The other is a collection of his journalistic impressions of Berlin, 1920-1933, translated as *What I Saw*, 2001.

[6] Ibid. p.73.

[7] Roth, *Hotel Savoy*, 1924.

[8] Op.cit. Pp.61, 88.

[9] Op.cit.p.115.

[10] Joseph Roth, *Flight without End* (*Die Flucht ohne Ende*). Edition, 1984, with introduction by Michael Hofmann.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibod.p.54.

[13] *Iob*, 1930

[14] *Das falsche Gewicht*, 1937.

[15] See English edition of *Weights and Measures*, 1983. Introduction by Beatrice Musgrave.

[16] *The Gospel of Matthew* 2:1-12, and the use of the term by James Joyce, *Portrait of the Artist as Young Man*, 1916.

[17] *Der stumme Prophet*, first published, long after his death, in 1966.

[18] *The Silent Prophet*, see the Publisher's Note.

[19] Ibid.p.12.

[20] Ibid.p.86.

[21] Ibid.p.100.

[22] Ibid.p.125.

[23] Ibid.p.157.

[24] Ibid.p.195.

[25] This person is thought to represent Stalin.

[26] *Rechts und Links,* 1929

[27] *Right and Left*, p.105.

[28] Roth, *Radetzkymarsch*, 1932.

[29] *The Radetzky March*, p.67.

[30] Ibid.p.22.

[31] Ibid.p.62.

[32] Ibid.p.222.

Review Essay

History and Hermeneutics of Religious Texts

Ananta Charan Sukla, *Sridhara Svami: A Medieval Philosopher of Religion,* Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi, 2010, pp. 180.

> "All critics are historicist upto a point. The pastness of the texts that we interpret demands accommodations of critical approach to negotiate historical differences". — *Paul Hamilton*

In 'The Frontiers of Criticism' (1956), one of his three most influential essays admired by F.R. Leavis [the other two being 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' (1917) and 'The Function of Criticism' (1923)] T.S. Eliot expounds the theory that criticism is 'commentation', 'evaluation' and exposition of work of art(s), and that the literary critic plays a crucial role in 'elucidating' and 'analyzing' texts/works of art as a dispassionate judge. While so doing in course of his 'pursuit of true judgement', an ideal critic, according to Eliot, should discipline and overcome his personal prejudices and cranks, and should resort to 'comparison' and 'analysis' as chief tools of literary criticism for better and more effective understanding of the reader(s). Whereas comparison facilitates the critic to correlate divergent thoughts, issues and nuances, analysis takes to elucidation as a necessary preparation for effective understanding and appreciation. At the same time, Eliot's warning that a critic should know 'what to compare' and 'what to analyze' obviously points to another important requisite qualification of a critic that he must have a very highly developed sense of fact. 'An ideal critic', Eliot boldly pronounces, 'must be an ideal reader'—a man of both range and depth, of critical insight and perceptive mind—so that he can satisfactorily correlate divergent ideas and issues in a befitting way. What is talked about an 'ideal critic' can be fairly applied to an ideal commentator on literary, religious and philosophical texts whose primary task is to make complicated and complex ideas easily accessible and aesthetically relishable for the reader through 'interpretation' of texts. Whereas comparison and analysis facilitate the process of understanding a text, it is interpretation that breathes life and soul into it. Eliot observes:

> Comparison and analysis need only the cadavers on the table; but interpretation is always producing parts of the body from its pockets and fixing them in place. *(The Function of Criticism)*

In literary criticism, 'interpretation' falls under the purview of 'Hermeneutics'—the art and theory of interpretation—which purports to reconstruct the original 'context' of a 'text' in order to appropriate/validate interpretation itself. Timothy Clark in the essay "Interpretation: Hermeneutics" observes that in predominantly religious texts like the *Bible,* hermeneutics aims at achieving a correct interpretation of the text in religious context. Hermeneutics raises some crucial questions today: a) What do we mean when someone claims that he/she 'understands' the text?, b) Does it mean his understanding and interpretation go in consonance with the author's life or its social or historical context?, c) Is it possible to understand/interpret the text exactly in the context in which it was produced?, d) How can a genuine understanding overcome the obstacles of both distance in historical time and often distance in culture?, e) Can we apply the same parameters of 'interpretation' and 'understanding' for literary, historical, religious and philosophical texts altogether?, f) Can't we bring 'texts' written in the past to 'reconstruct' them for relevant understanding today rather than for mere explanation on the basis of the written words?

In modern hermeneutics, we encounter what is called 'scientific appropriation' of the text in the hands of critics/commentators. But Hans-George Gadamer drew on Heidegger's arguments to endorse the authority of traditional intellectual skills such as textual interpretation by underplaying the scientific method. While appropriating Heidegger's philosophy, Gadamer holds that the historical and topical situation/condition of the society inhabited by the interpreter should constitute the central focus of his interpretation. In his major work *Truth and Method* (1960) Gadamer argues that the past can be grasped only in relation to the present—an extension of the Eliotian concept of tradition and historical sense. To Eliot, tradition does not mean blind past, thrives on a special kind of 'historical sense' which involves a "perception not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence" *(Tradition and the Individual Talent).* The historical sense propels a writer/critic, Eliot further maintains, not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that he has to respect the 'whole tradition' in terms of an 'unbroken continuity' so as to realize the fact that the past and present are not two disparate segments for clashing with each other, but two facets of the 'organic entity' constantly conditioning and enriching each other. Eliot observes:

> No poet, no artist of any sort, has his complete meaning alone. His significance, his appreciation is the appreciation of his relation to the dead poets and artists. You cannot value him alone, yet you must set him for contrast and comparison among the dead. I mean this as a principle of aesthetic not merely historical criticism. *(Tradition and the Individual Talent)*

In traditional method of historical criticism, interpretation is validated by external evidence and social-cultural context in which the author lived and his text produced. But, following Roland Barthe's contention that the author is dead and that a work is basically different from 'text', there comes up fresh scope for new perspectives. Whereas a work is delimited to some pages and limited space in the library for accommodation, a text with its multidimensional space and facts including sub-texts/subversive nuances and intertextuality opens up enormous possibilities for interpretation(s). The New historicists

like Stephen Greenblatt, Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield have attempted to situate literary texts with the institutions, social practices, religious and political ideologies on the ground that the 'text' interacts as both a 'product' and a 'producer' of cultural energies and codes. Their viewpoint is foregrounded upon the idea of history not as a homogeneous and stable pattern of facts and events which can be used as a background to the literature of a particular era, but as a constant interaction, negotiation, exchange, interchange/ transaction with other components inside the network of beliefs, institutions, practices and cultural power relations. The emphasis is laid on 'ordering of history' rather than 'periodization of history', and Stephen Greenblatt, a powerful exponent of New Historicism, emphasizes 'negotiation' and 'transaction' of diverse kinds of texts in relation to their institutional and cultural contexts: Contemporary theory must situate itself ... not out side interpretation, but in the hidden places of negotiation and exchange. (1989: 13)

The idea of negotiation of various texts is further extended in New historicism to the negotiation between the author, text and its readers who are constructed by the cultural conditions and ideological formations of their time. Since the ideology and cultural background of the author does not necessarily conform to those of his critics/ commentators/ readers, the New Historicists would therefore argue that the critic should not obviously 'naturalize' or 'universalize' the text in the backdrop of 'specific culture' and time bound representation. However, this does not mean that the contemporary socio-historical and cultural conditions in which the author lived and his text was produced should be blissfully forgotten. Louis Montrose in "Professing the Renaissance: The Poetics and Politics of Culture" characterizes New Historicism as a reciprocal concern with the 'historicality of texts' and the 'textuality of history', whereas Paul Hamilton in "Reconstructing historicism "tends to negotiate the 'past 'with the 'present' by celebrating the post-Structuralist position that there is no 'fixed meaning'/stabilized meaning and that literary texts can be adequately interpreted by situating them amid the discursive practices/friendship. To be precise, the pastness of the texts that we interpret demands, from New Historicist's point of view, accommodation of critical approaches to negotiate historical difference.

II

A. C. Sukla's book under review is a strenuous work and a stupendously executed critical achievement on Sridhara Svami (14th c. A.D.), one of the celebrated medieval philosophers of Bhagavata philosophy and religion that swept away the entire medieval India by virtue of its emotional ardour, passionate intensity and devotional ecstasy right from the days of Alvars (6th c. A.D.) down to the Bengal Vaisnavism of Sri Caitanya, Neo-Vaisnavism of Sankaradeva and Orissan Vaisnavism of the Pancasakha period. One of the significant aspects of medieval devotional mysticism, be it East or West, is that religion, philosophy and poetry constitute an inviolable trio, and this is all the more applicable in case of Dante, St. Bernard, the mine-mystics and the exponents of Bride mysticism as much as it is applicable to/for Jayadeva, Vidyapati and Candidasa who

infused religion and philosophy with poetic felicity and ecstatic expression. In their hands was achieved the reconciliation between sacred and profane when spiritual emotions were passionately conceived in terms of human relationship. Medievalism was characterized by what Richard Mckeon calls "the poetic expression of philosophy as well as the philosophic criticism of poetry" (1946: 230). Similarly, devotion *(bhakti)* was lauded as the most effective medium of experiencing man's emotional union with God through deep devotion and endearing attachment for a personal Lord—Visnu, Narayana, Krsna, Vasudeva—who, unlike Aristotle's 'Unmoved Mover' and Plato's 'Abstract Ideal' came down by virtue of benevolent love and grace (Agape) to take part in the emotional longing and ecstasy (Eros) of the devotee. What is called attributeless Reality *(Nirguna Brahman)* in philosophy is metamorphosed into a lovable Lord of attributes *(Saguna Brahman),* and the entire paraphernalia of devotion backed by faith *(sraddha)* and unconditional surrender bridges the wide gap between sacred and profane in a state of what G.A. Grierson calls 'communion with a personally conceived Ultimate Reality'. The seminal texts on bhakti in India like the *Bhagvad Gita* (BG), *Visnu Purana* (VP), *Bhagavata Purana* (Bhp), *Garga Samhita* (GS), *Bhaktisutras* of Narada and Sandilya bear testimony to the emotional ecstasy and divine rapture experienced by the devotee and the Adorable Lord, apart from indicating the amicable affinity and interaction of philosophy, religion and poetry—one constantly enriching the other/another. In this connection, J.S.M. Hooper's observation is apt: Religion, for most men in India as in the west, is weakest when it is merely intellectual and without emotional sympathy. (1928: 3)

Keeping in view the observations made by Richard Mckeon and J.S.M. Hooper, Sridhara's learned commentaries on BG, *VP* and *Bhp* and Sukla's assessment of Sridhara as a commentator and a philosopher of religion could be discussed together in the backdrop of the theoretical reflections of T.S. Eliot and the New-Historicists discussed earlier.

III

Eliot's authoritative remark that an ideal critic is an 'ideal reader' can be fairly applied to Acarya Sridhara whose invaluable Sanskrit commentaries on *BG, VP* and *Bhp* bespeak his profound scholarship, rare gifts of range and depth, intuition and critical insight with which he has handled philosophical, religious, linguistic issues, problems and questions. No less profound is the critical insight, range and depth in philosophy, religion, linguistics, history and literary criticism with which the author of the present monograph. Sukla decidedly competent as to throw sufficient light on hitherto untrodden areas of Sridhara's philosophic self— his major ideas and doctrines involving Ultimate Realty, individual souls and the phenomenal world and the ways and nature of experience of the Ultimate Reality. With his characteristic/constitutional seriousness, Sukla candidly states at the outset of the prologue that he finds it 'extremely risky' to 'study dispassionately' a philosopher of Sridhara's repute who was passionately attached to Bhagavat cult. While respectfully subscribing to Eliot's view that the ideal critic is a 'dispassionate judge', Sukla is equally aware of the responsibility of a cultural critic who

can't blissfully ignore the cultural context and the rich tradition of Bhakti movement and Bhagavata cult which nourished and nurtured the mind and heart of the medieval mystics, philosophers and men of religion. And Sridhara was no exception to it, Sukla observes:

> The phenomenon must be set in its proper cultural perspective prior to its critical evaluation where the critic has absolute right in viewing the phenomenon from multifarious perspectives, as he considers reasonable and appropriate for his purposes. (p. 7)

The author has challengingly defined his task ahead as a 'cultural responsibility'—a responsibility to situate Sridhara together with his commentaries on *BG*, *VP* and *Bhp* with remarkable comprehensiveness within the ambit of a dignified synthesis/syncretism of Saktism, Saivism, Sankhya dualism, Vedantic monism and Vaisnavism. While so doing, the major problem Sukla faces is Sridhara's identification of Krsna with the Absolute Reality, even though historians and cultural anthropologists have frequently underplayed Krsna as a mythical figure rather than accepting Him as the Ultimate Reality. However, he is aware of the fact that the logic of a philosophical concept/a religious idea is not grounded upon history, even though history facilitates the development of the former. Like a dispassionate judge in Eliotian sense of the term, he denies neither the efficacy of philosophy and religion nor underestimates the claims of history:

> I do not underestimate history. But I warn at the same time, any overestimate of history. History does not formulate ideas, although ideas are formulated in course of history. (p. 7)

Having said so, he also endorses the New-Historicist's view that literary texts can not grow single-handed and that the texts should be situated in terms of negotiation within the periphery of political ideologies, social practices and religious institutions. The *BG, VP* and *Bhp* as texts written at different times of history not only reflect the socio-cultural ethos in which they were produced, but also find themselves recreated/reconstructed through the commentaries of Sridhara and others thereby producing fresh cultural energies. Since history is not a homogenous and stable pattern of facts so that a specific historical pattern will be fixed for 'interpretation' of a particular text, what is felt as an imperative necessity is that there should be constant negotiation and interaction, exchange and interchange with other elements for cultural assimilation. In Sridhara's commentaries, one locates ample scope for negotiating various cultural strands. In the 'prologue' to his monograph, Sukla candidly states:

> Sridhara's unification of the Saivite and Vaisnavite cults through the unification of absolute monism of Sankara, qualified monism of Ramanuja, Madhva's dualism in studying the Puranic Vedanta non-dualism with its due weightage on the Sankhya-yoga dualism and the practices of the eight fold methods of Kriya-yoga, taking simultaneously the religious ritualistic worship of the Tamil Alvars (6^{th} c.-8^{th} c. A.D.) and the Vaisnava Tantras (rituals) of the Pancaratra School into account opened a vast area of inter-connected issues, ideologies, doctrines, both sacred and profane that threw me instantly into a fathomless ocean of diverse experiences. (p. 2)

In the first place, Sridhara was a Brahmin of Paippalada branch of *Atharva Veda* whose traditional rituals characteristic of brahminism combined with Saivism and Vaisnavism when he became a direct disciple of a Sankarite monk (Ramakrishnananda Svami) in the monastery of Kapilasha, a famous Saivite shrine in Odisha. Again, his commitment to the worship of Gopala/Gopinatha in accordance with the *Tapani Upanisads* of the *Atharva Veda* and of Nrsingha-Narayana whose blessings *(Sri Nrsingha prasadatah)* made him a devoted Bhagavata, paved the way for religious syncretism and formulated his all-embracing thought-process as well. Viewed from the stand point of philosophy, Sridhara was opposed to Sankara's absolute monism and advocated pure monism *(Suddhadvaita)* which was preached by both Madhva and Visnu Svami, whom he quote in his commentary on *Bhp* (I. 7. 6). S.N. Dasgupta argues that Sridhara was acquainted with Visnu Svami's commentary on the *Bhp* when the latter came to Puri on a pilgrimage. (IV. 382-3) Sankara Vedanta views the phenomenal world as an illusion, and emphasizes the permanent/unchangeable nature of Brahman consisting of two characteristics—essential *(svarupa)* and accidental *(tatastha).* Acarya Madhva contests Sankara's view point and strongly advocates the point that both 'essential' and accidental characteristics constitute the integrated nature of Brahman. Reality is transcendental in its essential *(svarupa)* aspect, whereas it is immanent *(saguna)* in its metaphorical *(tatastha)* aspects. The Buddhist notion of 'garbha' signifying Reality as essenceless *(nairatmya)* entails the fact that it is devoid of essence and form and hence a void *(sunyata).* Therefore, the Ultimate Reality is the object of indeterminate perception/cognition which is only metaphorical because it is beyond the scope of empirical comprehension/verification. But, Madhva accepts the upanisadic concept of atman-Brahman as all-pervading, and to him, Visnu is the Ultimate Reality. Unlike Sankara, he views the phenomenal world as real always associated with fivefold differences between (a) the self and Visnu, (b) the selves themselves, (c) matter and Visnu, (d) matter and matter, (e) matter and self.

Before the emergence of Sridhara, a fertile climate and a conducive ground had been prepared for qualified monism and knowledge based devotion *(jnana-bhakti)* as against the absolute monism of Sahkara. In chapter two of his book under discussion (Sridhara on Bhagavata ontology), Sukla has made an indepth analysis of the Ultimate Reality, individual souls and the phenomenal world. And while doing so, he has discussed that the Bhagavata ontology is foregrounded upon the *saguna* manifestation of Reality who was inclined to emanate itself for self-delight into different forms. The delightful self of Reality was more and more emphasized in the light of the upanisadic concept of *Rasa (raso vaisah)* and *Ananda (anandat khalu emani bhutani jayante)* as developed in *Taittiriya.* The paradigm of 'rasa-ananda' is solidly backed by the argument that Reality is Sat-Cit-Ananda and is necessarily constituted by Being the controller of all attributes and as the embodiment of purity and illumination *(sattva guna),* divine attributes *(gunas),* divine personality/incarnation *(divyavatara)* and divine activities *(divyalila).*

While recognizing the transcendent as well as immanent aspects of the Reality, the Bhagavata ontology embellished Reality further by adorning Him with twelve attributes

in terms of endearing human worldly association: wisdom *(jnana),* energy *(sakti),* strength *(bala),* lustre of the divine body *(tejas),* creative power *(virya),* prosperity *(aisvarya),* easy accessibility *(saulabhya),* fine manners *(sausilya),* filial feeling *(vatsalya),* grace *(krpa),* generosity *(adarya),* and friendship *(bandhuta).*

One can now safely share with Prof. Sukla's argument that "Reality is no more an abstract concept", and that the wide gulf between sacred and profane is considerably shrunk through the harmonization of the phenomenal and the ontological aspects of the Reality. Before Madhva, there were Ramanuja and Alvars, the mystic devotees of South who experienced emotional relationship with the *saguna* manifestation of Reality as Visnu, Narayana, Krsna, Vasudeva, the adorable personal Lord of Vaisnavism who possessed/possesses the phenomenal emotions and feelings without ever being afflicted by them. The Alvars exploited the Krsna myth to express their devotional longing for the Reality in terms of different human relationships—Periyar as the foster mother of Krsna (Yasoda), Kulasekhar as the natural mother (Devaki) and Andal as a milkmaid (gopi), and the devotional-emotional attachment with Reality in terms of *gopi bhava* has been established in *Narada bhaktisutras* and *Bhp* as the highest form of devotion *(bhakti)—yatha braja gopikanam.* Prof. Sukla cogently observes that the "recreation of Krsna-gopi relationship in a mythical pattern expedites both the poetic and philosophical insight of Nammalvar", and that in the three Bhagavata texts, the milk-maids undergo a substantial philosophical metamorphosis into a collective ontological symbol—in so far as they represent the very erotic aspect of the Ultimate Reality spoken as Rasa and Ananda. The poetic experience of the philosophy of Rasa, Ananda and erotic sentiment *(srngara)* was exploited after the classical codes of Vatsayana's *Kamasutra* and Bharata's *Natyasastra,* by Jayadeva in his *Gitagovinda* wherein the erotic enjoyment of the Reality (Krsna) with His delightful/sportive energy (Allhadini-sakti) called Radha was delineated in terms of passionate poetic expression.

As against the Vedanta identity of the universal and individual souls, the Alvars developed a paraphernalia of feudal relationship and accordingly the soul was viewed as a subservient property of the feudal Lord *(Paramatman)* characteristic of the concept of courtly love. At the same time, the Alvars developed the idea of unconditional self-surrender *(prapatti)* to the Lord by observing six-fold disciplines (firm determination, humility, faith, ardent prayer, absolute trust and refrain from action prohibited by Sastras) which can be correlated with the nine-fold devotion *(navadha-bhakti)* in the *Bhp*—listening, singing the Lord's glory, contemplating His greatness, service at His feet, offering articles, prostrating, servitude *(dasya),* friendly disposition and self- surrender. In Alvarian mysticism, salvation is eternal servitude and absolute self-surrender (*saranagati),* and the primary objective is to pine for an eternal vision of the determinate form of Reality. One is here reminded of the Satvatas and their methods of worshipping the Reality as detailed in Pancaratra texts/Satvat scriptures and as exhaustively discussed by Prof. Sukla in chapter one of the book under the title 'Bhagavata Cult in the Making'.

With their non-vedic theology and rituals of worship *(satvata vidhi),* the Satvatas are divided into two groups—one worshipping the four heroes of their mythical tradition,

and the other worshipping only Vasudeva as the manifestation of Narayana, the Ultimate Reality. In case of the former, Vasudeva, Sahkarsana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha, are worshipped together as four Vyuhas— manifestations of the Ultimate Reality (Purosottama). Whereas *Narada-pancaratra* prescribes the elaborate method of Krsna worship during five nights, *The Ahirbudhnya Samhita* recognizes the fivefold forms of the Reality: transcendent *(para),* emanatory *(vyuha),* aspects of prosperity *(vibhava),* self-controlling power *(antaryami)* and the very spiritual essence of the images *(arca).* The *Bhp* refers to the devotees of Narayana in the land of Dravidas who were none but the Alvars who worshipped Narayana according to Pancaratra rituals and who agreed to the Pancaratra philosophy that Reality has five forms of manifestation as detailed above. Surprisingly, Sridhara is well aware of the fact that in *Bhp* (VI. 16. 33) Vasudeva-Krsna is the embodiment of Narayana, the deity of the Satvata scriptures (satvata sastra vigraha); and Sridhara interprets the Sanskrit phrase 'vigraha' (image) by indicating the fact that it is prescribed in the Satvata scriptures *(satvat sastrokta)* wherein emphasis has been laid on the spiritual essence of the images. More significantly, the Oriya poet Jagannatha Das (16th c. A.D.) who made an Oriya transcription of the *Bhp* not only recognized Sridhara with humility and great admiration, but identified Satvatas with Yadavas, the descendents of Yadu, son of the mythical king Yayati, from Sukra's daughter Devayani, and also spoke of Krsna as the deity of the Yadava dynasty. S.N. Dasgupta maintains that the 'Narayaniya' section of the *Mahabharata(XII.* 335-348) bears the stamp of the Aryan accommodation of the Satvatas, and that *BG* is composed by the Satvatas and later inserted into the epic (Dasgupta: I. 422). Here it is important to note that Sridhara's reference to and interpretation of 'vigraha' points to the entire paraphernalia of image-worship in Satvata scriptures/ Pancaratra texts including *Narada-pancaratra* and *Ahirbudhnya,* and also to the replacement of the vedic ritualistic method of worship by offering agrarian and natural products such as flowers, milk, curd, ghee, tila, dhanya, vrihi, incense and tambula. Sukla rightly states that the Satvat form of worship was 'appropriate for a pastoral and agrarian society during the later Vedic age. Evidently, the Vedic Visnu-Narayana merged with Vasudeva-Krsna of the Satvatas giving rise to systematic image worship which was absent in orthodox religious systems. Sridhara's worship of Krsna as the Adorable Ultimate Reality can therefore be situated/negotiated in the context of the Satvata system of agrarian society/economy and culture.

IV

Since Bhagavata Philosophy/Cult is grounded upon Saguna-bhakti, Sridhara is a Bhagavata reared in the tradition of qualified monism and knowledge-based devotion. Sukla categorically denies that Sridhara was a follower of Absolute monism of Sankara. S.K. De, a learned scholar on Vaisnavism, maintains in his *Early History of Vaisnava Faith and Movement in Bengal* (1961) that Sridhara's commentary on the *Bhp* was instrumental in propagating knowledge-based bhakti in Bengal—a fact that has been unabashedly acknowledged by Krsnadasa Kaviraj in his *Chaitanya Caritamrta* (1615).

Sridhara has also been the central source of inspiration for Sri Caitanya and his philosophy of 'Achintyabhedvada', whereas his *Bhavarthadipika Tika* on *Bhp* has

established him as a decided philosopher of religion and a great critic/commentator so as to inspire Sankaradeva (Assam) and Jagannatha Dasa (Odisha) to render the *Bhp* into their native languages. Behind Sridhara's acceptance of the concept of qualified monism and knowledge-based devotion, none can set aside the influence of Ramanuja's Visistadvaita philosophy.

To Ramanuja who established his monastery at Puri and propounded Srivaisnavism as well, Reality is a determinate entity *(savisesa)* with attributes and a corporeal body that is organically related to the universe of sentient souls *(cit)* and non-sentient souls *(acit).* Unlike the Alvars who directed their eternal servitude to the Reality in terms of human relationship, Ramanuja proposed bhakti as worship *(upasana)* in terms of an intellectual approach in that action *(karma)* and knowledge *(jnana)* purify the mind of the worshipper thereby paving the path for *bhakti.* His intellectual approach involves a five-fold process of progression—approach *(adhigamana),* preparation of offering *(upadana),* oblation *(ijya),* recitation *(svadhyaya)* and devotion *(bhakti)*—which might not have escaped the notice of Sridhara. At the same time, with his access into Kriya Yoga and Patanjali's notion of Isvara, Sridhara too found a philosophical coil to heal the Sankhya concept of dualism between Prakrti and Purusa. Prof. Sukla therefore rightly observes that Sridhara's ontology of Bhagavata is a harmonization of the Vedantic monism with Sankhya-Yoga system, Pancaratra cult, Saktism and Saivism.

With his perceptive awareness of the 'historical sense' and the wave of religious and philosophical syncretism that exercised its strong foothold in the post-Sankarite period, Sridhara as an ideal critic generously kept all doors open for negotiation, exchange and transaction of ideas so as to encourage cultural assimilation. For instance, in his commentaries on three Bhagavata texts, he has accommodated, like his predecessor Madhva, a healthy compromise between dualism and monism, Saivism and Vaisnavism, and between Saktism and Vaisnavism. Here, it is pertinent to mention that several puranas composed during the Classical (6th -9th c.) period tended to synthesize/assimilate the trends of Saktism, Saivism and Vaisnavism to achieve social cohesiveness, religious tolerance/harmony, political unity and protection/preservation of culture against the onslaught of Islam. For instance, the *Markandeya Purana* and *Devi Bhagavata* synthesized Saktism with Saivism and Vaisnavism by interpreting *Sakti* not as an exclusive concept under the domain of Saktism, but by extending the concept to all other modes of worship. Consequently, Sakti, the spouse of Siva alone facilitated a synthesis of Mahakali (spouse of Siva), Mahalaksmi (spouse of Visnu) and Mahasarasvati (spouse of Brahma)—all merging into one in the concept of Narayani Sakti (Durga), the energy of Narayana, the adorable Lord of/in Vaisnavism. The juxtaposition of the two words — goddess (devi) and 'Bhagavata' (Visnu) further establishes the classical and medieval religious syncretism.

Viewed in a broader perspective, energies assigned to all gods and goddesses in Hindu Pantheon are essentially possessed by Narayana, the fountain source of everything. No wonder therefore is the fact that the divine energy of the Absolute is interpreted in terms of the feminine gender (Narayani). Sukla aptly observes that 'in post

Sahkara writings fictionalization of philosophical doctrines was a popular practice that drew upon epics and puranas, *Mbh*, *VP* and *Bhp* more than upon any dialectical treatises. (p. 54) For instance, Madhva was 'an extremely skilled hermeneutician' who not only allegorized the struggle between Kauravas and Pandavas as the conflict between good and evil, but also extrapolated his own views, through omission and imposition of views and episodes from other texts thereby encouraging intertextuality, 'exchange', negotiation and transaction. While justifying his dualistic views in terms of his discourses on *Ramayana, Mahabharata* and *Bhagavata Purana,* he selectively chooses those episodes and arguments which would strengthen his philosophy and critical approach without bothering for the contextual fallacy. This adroit art of interpretation is further discernible in his discourse on *BG* wherein he chooses the method of comparison and analysis to direct his discourse against Sankara's monistic views by banking upon the text and from other Puranas as well.

Sridhara is another shrewd hermeneutician who in course of his interpretation of *BG, VP* and *Bhp* tends to establish the supreme efficacy of Lord Krsna over others *(krsnam vande jagad gurum).* In the first place, he attempts to negotiate/achieve harmony between Vaisnavism and Saivism that are usually at daggers' drawn— Visnu being Vedic and Siva, essentially worshipped as a tribal god. In the very introductory verse of his commentary on *BG,* he salutes both Visnu and Siva with appropriate obeisance by semantically playing upon two words, i.e., 'Madhava' and 'Uma-dhava'. Whereas the former combines Saktism ('Ma'-Laksmi) with Vaisnavism ('dhava'-husband-Visnu), the latter points to a happy marriage of Saktism and Saivism —'Uma' epitomizing Sakti and 'dhava' in this case signifying Siva. Sridhara's purport to situate Visnu and Siva at par is adroitly indicated by the lyrical structure of the two words (Madhava + Umadhava) reminding the reader of the amicable affinity of poetry, philosophy and religion in medieval cultural condition. In much the same way, in the invocation part of his commentary on *Bhp,* he repeats the identification of 'Madhava' and 'Umadhava' as two sides of the same cosmic self. But, in his commentary on *VP,* he salutes Srikrsna as 'saccidananda brahma' in conjunction with 'Umadhava'. The deliberate use of these two words in his commentaries obviously makes the reader curious to know about the speciality of their use and interpretation. And this inevitably forces the reader further to search for some socio-historical-cultural contexts and religious affiliations if any behind the entire episode. Historians of medieval Odisha like H.K. Mahtab (1958-59) argue that during the later Gahga rule in Odisha (from Narasinghdeva I-IV to Bhanudeva I-IV) extending from 1238 to 1436 A.D., Visnu and Siva were treated as two sides of the same Reality. Such was the larger religious sentiment/belief which not only preoccupied the medieval Odishan mind but also decidedly influenced/got reflected in the art, architecture, sculpture and methods of religious rituals and philosophical thinking. The mindset and prosperity for harmonization and cultural assimilation in fact points to a negotiation between Vedic-Aryan and non-Aryan thoughts on the basis of which was erected the edifice of Bhagavata cult— the synthesis of Visnu-Narayana with Krsna-Vasudeva worship of Satvatas. It is really difficult to believe that Sridhara, being an erudite scholar and a man of wide-

ranging experience/acquaintance was unaware of this contemporary cultural development. Sridhara the critic and commentator (contra Roland Barthes' theoretical position) can not be drastically taken in isolation from Sridhara the philosopher of religion because the very fact of his being a worshipper of Nrsingha-Narayana-Gopinatha-Krsna and a champion of Bhagavata cult cannot be separated from his association with Sahkarite monastery at Puri and with Lord Siva at Kapilasa hills. These are perhaps the intricate reasons why he has tenaciously insisted on interpreting 'Madhava' and 'Umadhava' as two sides of the Ultimate Reality.

Time and again, Visnu-Siva relationship crops up in the Vaisnavite texts, and in *Bhp* (X. 87. 25), now Siva is vanquished by Visnu and the next moment the latter comes to save him from the clutches of the demons like Bana and Brka (X. 62-63; X. 88). Siva who reduced the god of love (Kama) to ashes ironically falls in love with the attractive feminist form (Mohini) of Visnu. In *Garga Samhita* despite their duel, Visnu and Siva are treated as inseparable from each other. Sridhara's interpretation of the words like 'Madhava' and 'Umadhava' is strongly reminiscent of Jayadeva's association of 'Radha' with 'Madhava' in the *Gitagovinda* thereby pointing to the cosmic non-duality on the one hand and to the cultural harmony of Saktism and Vaisnavism in the medieval Orissa on the other. Sridhara's interest in the word 'Madhava' can be further appropriated and culturally correlated with the iconic evidences—worship of one brass image configuring both Visnu and Durga in the Madhava temple of Niali built in the 12th c. A.D. on the bank of the Praci river in the Puri district of Odisha. The worship of 'Durga-Madhava' can be further correlated with the worship of Vimala (spouse of Siva) and Kamala (Laksmi) as consorts of Lord Jagannatha at Puri, a place of religious syncretism. One is further tempted to know and realize how the word 'Madhava' has been a part and parcel of Odisha's cultural psyche and this is evident from the chanting of benedictory verses (mangalastaka) by priests of Odisha in the beginning of Vedic rituals wherein the word 'Madhava' is uttered several times.

Not only that, in the invocation to Sridhara's commentary on Bhp, one stanza is inserted (which is originally found in *Bhavisyottara Purana)* wherein Lord Visnu is addressed as 'Paramananda Madhava' which occurs in his commentary on *BG* also. The association of 'Madhava' with 'Paramananda' (Absolute Bliss) reminds one of the upanisadic glorification of Brahman as 'saccidananda' and of the *Bhp*'s definition of Krsna: 'Isvara Paramakrsna saccidananda Vigraha'. Prof. Sukla endorses the observation of Nabhadas in that Sridhara, the hermeneutician interprets Krsna, the Ultimate Reality as 'Rasa' and 'Ananda' by intertextually negotiating with *Taittariya Upanisad* in order to make his interpretation more plausible and convincing in the context of Bhagavata ideology. Sukla, with his wide-ranging depth and scholarship, tends to extend the interpretation further by indicating how the upanisadic concept of 'Rasa' and 'Ananda' was later theorized by Bharata *(Natyasastra)* and the medieval aestheticians in the context of the ontology and epistemology of the theatrical performance and Rasa theory *(rasa nispatti).*

Since Sridhara unambiguously accepts Sri Krsna as the Ultimate Reality, his very interpretation of the word 'Krsna' is based on more in consonance with the Upanisad *(Gopalapurvatapani)* than with the linguistic etymology/interpretation — Krsna being derived from the root 'krs' meaning 'to plough'. He accepts the metaphysical perspective rather than the empirical one and accordingly Krsna is interpreted as 'existence' (krs) and 'ecstasy' (na). The focus in Sridhara's view of Bhagavata ontology is not the empirical/historical issues, but transcending the mythical/historical contexts in favour of religious signification. Accordingly, he explains Sri Krsna as the divine being who exists in the consciousness of his devotees as pure existence (sat), pure consciousness (cit) and pure beatitude *(ananda).* The focus is, as Prof. Sukla rightly puts, 'on the beauty and beatitude of the phenomenal manifestation *(divyalila)* of Krsna the Ultimate Reality' (p. 88). Whereas Vedanta considers this manifestation as illusions, the Bhagavatas like Sridhara consider it a metaphor *(tatastha property)* and emphatically affirm both the essential *(svarupa)* and metaphorical properties at par and in this respect he comes closer to Madhva in his opposition to Sahkara, who rejected the *tatastha laksan*a of the Reality as false/illusory. Viewed from this perspective, Vaisnava puranas explain the concept of divine sport *(divyalila)* of Lord Visnu who performs as well as participates in this play/sport without being affected by it. Followers of Yamunacarya tend to justify lila as a self-play of the Brahman who has created the world in a playful manner out of spontaneity and also dissolves it with playful spontaneity. Since Visnu is pervasive in nature, His lila is as real as He Himself is. Sridhara universally pleads for bhakti as the only way of experiencing Reality (Visnu-Krsna), whereas Sahkara, emphasizing knowledge and renunciation of fiction, asserts that the experience of Reality is a 'conceptual cognition'. It is through bhakti that the Rasa experience of Reality can be fulfilled because Reality is within our reach as a lover/a man of sport *(lila)* rather than an abstract entity. The bhakti experience of Reality being essentially a rasa experience, and Reality being an aesthetic entity, the Bhagavata notion of bhakti elevates rasa to a level of purity *(sattva)* and ecstatic bliss *(anandamaya)* in which the devotees, taking part in the divine sport with the Divine-lover-Krsna are bound to rise above the low levels of passionate activity *(rajas)* and delusion *(tamas).* It is in this mode of interpretation that Sridhara streamlines his commentary on Krsna-gopi relationship within the framework of bhakti as adumbrated in the 'Rasa-pancadhyayi' section of the *Bhp* (X. 29-33). In chapter III of his book under the title 'The Bhagavata Epistemology of Sridhara', Prof. Sukla has very lucidly but convincingly brought out the 'whole some ecstatic reciprocation between humanity and divinity (Krsna) through bhakti on the ground that the devotee must whole-heartedly surrender himself/herself before the Divinity by purging off all petty selfish and subjective questions—of pride, jealousy, ego and arrogance. In the *Bhp,* the moment the gopis developed the ego of being the beloveds of Krsna who carried them on his shoulders, they were mercilessly thrown away by him. Sridhara's contention is that bhakti and ego are incompatible to/with each other. The Krsna-gopi relationship as interpreted by Sridhara is a rare paradigm, archetype of bhakti, absolute self-surrender *(atmanivedana)* and 'dehasamarpana'—surrender of body. Sridhara argues that the milkmaids attend Krsna

by their erotic relation *(kama)* in which there is absolutely no immorality in such relationship with Divinity. In other words, the sexual desire aimed at Divinity can not be interpreted as a sexual desire in ordinary sense of the term which drifts, in a way, into bestiality. Sridhara categorically rules out this contradiction in the following: When divinity itself is the object of sexual passion, the passion itself loses its burning character, resulting therefore in the experience of the highest bliss. (Sukla: 133)

At the same time, Sridhara defends the erotic-devotional relationship on the metaphysical ground that Krsna, being omnipresent, his relationship with milkmaids can not be branded as adultery and that they are his devotees. Moreover, the erotic relationship of a boy of seven years with many matured cowherd women can not be thought of. In the language of Sridhara, Krsna, being atmarama (self-relishing) enjoys rasa in terms of rasa dance by taking recourse to his inherent potency called *mayasakti* and in his tatasthya form, not in his svarupa form. The Reality can not be a victim to passion, as he is the cupid of cupids, and as such there is no reference to any erotic relationship in the episode of rasa. To be precise, the five chapters on Rasa, according to Sridhara, reflect the transcendentality of the whole affair *(nivrttipara)* and the highest bliss consists in embracing the Reality *(Acyuta)* in meditation *(dhyana)* rather than in sense-perception. But, Prof. Sukla has rightly points out the contradictions confronted by Sridhara. On the one hand, he (Sridhara) agrees with Visnucitta in that one merges with Krsna through kama thereby accepting the question of physical union as described in the *Harivamsa, VP* and Bhp. On the other hand, he interprets the whole of rasa relationship in the *Bhp* as 'nivrtti of passion', and even extends the interpretation of *nivrtti* to other relationships—of fear, anger and enmity—thereby vindicating his stand as a skillful artist of interpretation.

In Sridhara's scheme of things, Sri Krsna is the Absolute Reality *(paramadhama)* who by virtue of his all-pervasive nature (Visnu) is the master of the phenomenal reality also *(Jagatdhama).* The name 'Krsna' signifies both the absolute *(paramarthika)* and relative *(vyavaharika)* aspects *(satta)* of the Vedantic Brahman. Myth, History, Philosophy and Religion finally commingle in the concept of Krsna whose mythical character is, for Sridhara, a metaphysical principle—the Ultimate Reality *(parama satyam)* and the Absolute Lord *(paramesvara).* Sridhara's quintessential Visnutattva, as interpreted in his commentary on *VP* (I. I. I) reveals that Lord Visnu/ Krsna is everywhere and that His transcendental and immanental play constitute the real truth. Reality pervades the whole universe as the fountain source of its creation, continuation and dissolution—and these are but phenomenal manifestation *(divya lila)* of the Absolute whose beauty and beatitude can be relished only through unalloyed devotion and total surrender. Prof. Sukla has done really a commendable job by bringing to the fore Sridhara's treatment/ interpretation of Bhagavata ontology/ philosophy/ religion/ epistemology by correlating all orthodox and heterodox systems of philosophy/religious belief and by satisfactorily discharging his "cultural responsibility" of establishing Sridhara not in isolation but in his totality—as a saint, commentator and a philosopher of religion.

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Book Reviews

Jose Carlos Gomes da Silva, *The Cult of Jagannatha: Myths and Rituals, Delhi;* Motilal Banarsidass, 2010, pp. XVI+206.

The central thesis of the book questions the observations of Alexander McDonald (1975) that "the religious culture of the Jagannatha worship at the city of Puri is par excellence a meeting place between the Aryan and non-Aryan elements of the population", and of Charles Fabri that "the temple of Jagannatha along with all others built during the 7th-14th centuries bear the marks of non-Aryan beliefs". He also questions the existing researches on the subject that discover the prominence of heterodox philosophical ideas as well as the religious rites in the system of Jagannatha worship. (p. XV) Instead, the author argues that both the temple and the rituals cohere with the Brahmanic orthodoxy reflected in other places of India including the groups of temples of Khajuraho of Madhya Pradesh and some others in Rajasthan. "How to interpret", the author writes, "the iconographic specificity of Puri deities?" What status should be attributed to the Sudra ritualists of the great temple? The present book provides new answers to these old questions. Puzzling as it may appear, the 'strangeness' of Orissa ethnography is a particular — yet extremely coherent – expression of Indian traditions". (p. XVI)

The standing problem related to the issue in question is its historicity — what probable time could be attributed to the beginning of this Vaisnavite shrine leaving the mythologization of the whole phenomenon, that fixes it to the beginning of the Drapara aeon, altogether? One can confidently propose that historically, the shrine never dates earlier than the 9th century, because it does not appear on the list of the pilgrimage of the South Indian Vaisnava saints called Alvars who were active during the 6th-9th centuries enlisting the Tirumala hills (installed in the 5th C.), Dwaraka, Vrindavan and Naimisyaranya as their regular pilgrim spots. During the visit of Hsuan Tsang (7th C.) the whole of coastal Orissa was pervaded by the Vajrayan Buddhist tantric system of religious practices. Some scholars, therefore, observe reasonably that the Puri shrine was originally a Buddhist stupa/ caitya, a mound converted to the temple, the place being identified with a "blue mountain" (nila giri/ adri/ parvata etc). If so, then this conversion must be much later than Hsuan Tsang's visit. The Sanskrit texts that mythologise the shrine are some portions of the Skanda Purana, Brahma Purana and Matsya Purana that cannot be dated earlier than the 11th-12th century. Portions of the Madala documents that deal with the early history of the shrine are surreptitious. It appears, quite reasonably, keeping the issue of conversion aside, that the shrine was founded some time between the 10th-11th centuries most probably by Yayati I (of the Soma dynasty 922-955) who was a great patron of Brahmanism admired by the historians for uniting Kosala with Odra and Kangoda, the western and the coastal regions of the modern Orissa. The temple was subsequently renovated and enlarged by the Ganga kings during the early part of the 12th century (1110 AD onwards), although the rulers of both the dynasties were Saivites as well. But the point that remains yet to be clarified is what exactly was the nature of the deities and their worship. Unfortunately, the records available mystify and mythologize this pivotal issue so notoriously that it seems ever irrecoverable. As it stands now, the four distorted anthropomorphic images – represent the Bhagavata cult, non-Aryan in its character. Krsna Vasudeva, his elder brother Balarama and sister Ekanamsa commonly known as Subhadra (Brihatsamhita, 57 of Varaha 5th C.) with Sudarsana the wheel-weapon of Krsna. The accessibility of the deities to the common people of all the castes and not only to the Brahmins and rice-offering to be shared among all the castes, are the features of the shrine that oppose the Brahmin-dominated rituals of the orthodox Aryan culture. It is not yet clear whether such tradition prevails from the very beginning or is introduced later. The suggestions that an original Buddhist shrine is converted into the Vaisnava one is not also untenable because of the orthodoxy of the Soma ruler Yayati. Again, the king Indradyumna of the legends and myths etymologically meaning one who is capable of strength, power and fame (dyumna) like Indra, the king of the gods of heaven, might be identified with this Soma ruler who actually performed Asvamedha sacrifice, and as coming from the western region might be also identified as the king of Malava, a kingdom west to the coastal Orissa. Coincidentally, Yayati had a strong cultural tie with Kanauja as evident from his inviting Brahmins of high order from that country.

All these crucial features of the whole phenomenon are simply ignored by the author da Silva, his sole effort centering around legitimatizing the myths and legends available in the Sanskrit and vernacular texts into a systematic Aryan structural order. His scholarship is admirable so far as he applies the structural theory of myth pioneered by Claude Levi-Strauss in studying the whole range of myths that are actually, possibly and probably related to the myth and rituals of the Jagannatha worship. Thus the mythical isomorphism that he discovers is extremely enlightening, insightful and informative although unfortunately, the whole discovery appears irrelevant in shedding any new light on the core point of the issue concerned. The reader wants to know the core points: At what point of history the shrine was founded? Who was the founder? What was the course of this foundation? Whether the initial features of the worship including iconology and worship rituals are still the same or has undergone changes? If so, then why? And finally, What are the courses of these changes?

The legends say that there was a sapphire image of Vishnu originally worshipped by an aboriginal. What was the kind of that image – iconic or aniconic? An iconic image should be worshipped by the pancaratric tantric method which must be unknown to the aboriginal worshipper, its being known only to a trained and educated Brahmin. If aniconic, then how to identify it with Visnu? The author's discovery that the "blue mountain" is simply a symbol of the cosmic pole (meru) substitutable by the cosmic tree (banyan) is acceptable, but only conditionally. The other alternative that there was a Buddhist mound caitya (tree)/ stupa later converted to a stone temple is equally acceptable. But a historically plausible argument is preferred to a fictionally probable argument. The Indradyumna legend is not merely an archetypal event. It has also a historical reference that a historian must trace out. It seems that the fame of the shrine as Sri-kshetra is not properly understood by the author who stresses the name Purusottama a kshetra, thus tracing its Vedic/ Aryan significance. Sri-kshetra might be referring to the influences of Ramanuja, the south Indian Vaishnava of the Sri school who came to the shrine during the Ganga rule (11th C.) and founded his monastery just in front of the main temple. Ramanuja exercised

significant influences on the whole system of rituals as he was emphasizing the Vyuha-worship of the Bhagavata cult (See Sukla, 2010). If, according to the author, a non-Aryan system has not been Aryanized, the other pole of the truth cannot be denied. In fact, as it stands, there is positively a compromise between both the systems – the orthodox and the heterodox without any domination of the either – it is a syncretism. This is precisely what the legend in both its versions – Sanskrit and vernacular – concludes. Indradyumna, his Brahmin emissary Vidyapati and the aboriginal worshipper Visvavasu all bow to the final decision of the divinity. Vishnu as Jagannatha is therefore radically different from Visnu as Venkatesa (Tirumala) who is not accessible to all – is touched only by the Brahmin priests. The latter is Vedic but the former is non-Vedic (obviously because Krishna is not a Vedic god), if not certainly anti-Vedic. The rituals of Jagannatha is therefore not ordained strictly according to the Vedic principles.

The vital issues of the whole phenomenon need a thorough investigation that have remained mystified so far, although at the same time the present author must be admired for his insight into the structural arrangement of the myths and rituals relating to the issues concerned in a codified manner.

Claude Calame, *Greek Mythology: Poetics, Pragmatics and Fiction*, Trans. Janet Lloyd, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, pp. 275.

The present work, originally published in French in 2000, interprets items of the Greek mythology in terms of literary narratives or fictions. Myths, understood as fictions is of course an Aristotelian trend which teaches us that the *mythos* of a Greek tragedy is a probable mimesis of reality. Thus, according to Aristotle, myths are more philosophical/general than historical events. Modern anthropologists treat myths as the representation of the social events including even the religious rituals. Calame suggests that these myths falling between social reality and cultural fiction emerge as a literary form or kind. Greek myths, of course, are not only the contents of the major forms of Greek literature such as epic, tragedy and lyric, they are also found in the historical and geographical texts of Herodotus, Thucydides, Strabo, Pausamias and Pliny. Calame would argue that wherever they are found, they attain a literary status because of their fictionality, thus presuming the nature of literature as fiction, a thesis already prepared by the Canadian critic Northrop Frye who is drawing upon Karl Jung, considers literary forms as major archetypes reflected in the seasons of the Western climate—Winter, Spring, Summer and Autumn (Fall). Plato's philosophical dialogues also depict events fictionally. Viewed in this light, stressing the fictional aspect of literature and ignoring its formal aspects, Calame functions as an Aristotelian critic, joining the Neo-Aristotelians/Chicago critics as against the New Critics of the twentieth century: it is plot (mythos) not language that makes literature—"the Greek idea of a poetic product as an artifact that creative mimesis turns partly into fiction and partly into a reference to reality seems very modern. As has been suggested, it more or less responds to what we understand by the use of the term and concept 'fictional'." (p. 47) Keeping aside the logical issue of the "possible world" theory, the author undertakes the issue of linguistic reference for explaining myth as a fictional construction, or rather as a linguistic narration. He argues that in a linguistic

manifestation there are two processes of reference—internal and external. The former is purely linguistic such as anaphora and the latter is a deictic device that relates an utterance to extralinguistic phenomena such as time, place and person. Thus following Karl Bühler, the German linguist, the author argues that there is no need for a special kind of language, rather a need for *interweauing* these two referential processes, producing a network that links the natural and social reality and the linguistic discourse, a network in which both the author and the audience (recipients/interpreters) exist. This way the fictional product (myth) acquires a *pragmatic force*. Interestingly enough, the author's idea of a pragmatic force differs from that of the traditional pragmatist linguists such as Austin and his pupil Searle. The author's pragmatic force is distinguished from Austin's illocutionary force of an utterance, or Searle's "act of pretending to perform an illocutionary act of assertion with no intention to deceive". Drawing upon Longinus's idea of *phantasia*, the author says that the network of the two referential processes enables the poet or the mythmaker to place what he says before the eyes of the listeners, i.e., the members of a community of a particular cultural and epistemological nature that includes its religious beliefs and practices as well. Thus myth as a fiction has also its religious appeal responsible for enabling the addressee (listener/interpreter) for sharing with the speaker in comprehension and active and cognitive interpretation of the speech or discourse that is called a myth.

The author, then, makes the point clear that it is the shared religious belief that makes a myth meaningful for both the myth maker (the part) and the reader, for both of whom a myth is both semantically and pragmatically (practically) meaningful. Such an observation delimits the scope of any universal appeal of a myth, the phenomenon being not simply a story to be enjoyed aesthetically, but also a system of religious practice that makes it typically illocutionary, where the meaning of a discourse is interwoven with its practice or use. To be precise, the author now shares with those theorists of myth who consider it as a discourse of ritual. The deictic expressions such as "there", "once upon a time", "a king named Agamemnon or a hero named Odysseus" are meaningful, significant or interesting only to the Greeks or Europeans who share with their cultural perspectives. In this regard the author does not hesitate to claim that history is also mythical or fictional—in its claiming for recounting (the empirical) reality which it only fabricates. Myth then, in a way, like history, evokes nationalism—one can not appreciate a myth unless one participates with deictic elements. Homer, Hesiod and Pindar, the mythmakers of Greece contributed both to the Greek language and the nationalist spirit of the whole culture. Its heroic past with its religious practices are all presented to the Greeks and Europeans through the interwoven process of linguistic and extralinguistic factors.

The author further notes a different dimension of the concept of myth in its anthropological perspectives where 'myth' replaces 'fable' undergoing three essential transformations: (1) myths treated as the manifestation of pre-philosophical thought is now treated as the origin of historical line, i.e., the dawn of a linear history of nation concerned; (2) *mythos* and *logos* are no more two binary concepts, the former evolving into the latter, and thus losing its narrative aspect as forming more and more a particular cultural context; (3) as a particular mode of human thought it now gains an ontology,

reality that transcends its semi-empirical character, and in this transformation, as a unitary substance (rather than a collection of heterogeneous stories) becomes a scientific phenomenon fit for interpretation/analysis assigned to the branch of knowledge called *mythologies* by Levi-Strauss: "Mythological patterns have to an extreme degree the character of absolute objects, which would neither lose their old elements nor acquire new one if they were not affected by external influences" (p. 7). The author then claims that this transformational approach to the myths—studying them in their evolution from stray stories *in a culture* to a structural unity, one turns down the binary dichotomies such as primitive/developed, oral/written and nature/culture thus recalling Levi-Strauss/ Derrida debates over structuralism and deconstructionism.

Having thus drawn a theoretical outline, the author exemplifies the logic of his arguments by analyzing some popular myths. One such myth is the story of the rape of Persephone, the different versions of which correlate its different fictional, religious (pragmatic) and historical perspectives that indicate the cultural evolution of a nation that might be called Greek, European or Western.

The story of Earth goddess Demeter and her daughter Persephone (Kore) from the sky god Zeus, as observed by J.G. Frazer, embodies or personifies the agrarian events of growing corn and its harvest—Demeter the Corn Mother and Persephone the Corn Maiden who dies/enters Hades as *abducted* by the god Pluto, and is reborn or resurrected in form of sowing the seed and germination. The same is interpreted by Karl Jung as the archetypes of death and rebirth. But for the writers of this myth, from Homer to Isocrates through Diadorous and Apollodous, considered it as the origin of their cultural history interwoven with the religious rites that establishes the relationship between divinity and humanity. Earlier writers mention Demeter's first arrival in Eleusis in search for her daughter and pleased by the reception of the inhabitants there, offers them cereals as a gift of the mankind, whereas Isocrates claims her first arrival in Athens. In doing so he subjugates other parts of Greece to Athens both politically and economically. It is Athens, not Eleusis that developed agriculture and thus the promoter of an agrarian civilization in the European world. On the other hand, Eleusians claim that it is there in their land that Demeter taught how humanity can be related to divinity, and this relationship must be *performed* cyclically through the specific rituals that are Eleusian mysteries—mysteries of the ceaseless birth, death and rebirth that keep up the continuity of the humanity-divinity relationship.

The manifold nature of myth—a fiction, an aspect of national history, an absolute reality presented in form of a text open for interpretation, a ritual meant for regular performance—as the author Calame offers, tends to be an advancement over the earlier theories of allegory, symbol and mimetic rites. But the network of his interpretation and reference does not force a reader to assign him the status of originality that he seems to claim. He is erudite, and is remarkably insightful. But excepting wide-ranging information by way of references to a considerable number of researches on the topic, he perhaps adds only the historicity of myth to the earlier studies by the galaxy of groundbreaking theorists such as Frazer, Cassirer, Jung, Eliade, Levi-Strauss and Malinowsky. His

argument that myth is not merely an Aristotelian *mythos* as radically different from *logos*, but is also transformed to a *logos*, posed the question: Can this transformation retain the fictionality of *mythos*? For him *mythology* does not mean merely a collection of myths, it is also a logic of fictionality. Mythologies might be a distinct branch of knowledge, like poetics, rhetorics, physics open for technical analysis, one such methodology being provided by Levi-Strauss on the model of structural linguistics. But what new method does the author actually provide excepting the view that myth can be studied both as poetical fiction and performance speech act that belong to two different branches of knowledge—poetics and pragmatics? Further, following the author one ponders, whether the meaning of the myths is strictly confined to the appeal of that particular nation that produces it suggesting that myths are meaningful only in its cultural context, its transculturality being at stake. (pp. 37-38)

Richard Hunter, *Critical Moments in Classical Literature: Studies in the Ancient View of Literature and Its Uses*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009, pp. 217.

The author's key argument is that critical insight and, in some way practice as well, originated not in the philosophical texts of ancient Greece but in the pre-philosophical literary texts, particularly in the play *Frogs* by Aristophanes (5th c. B.C.). Secondly, he demonstrates that in the ancient Greece the use of poetry was not for its delighting effect only but fir its educative function as well: "poetry lay at the heart of 'classical' education" (p. 2). Aristophanes tells in the mouth of Aeschylus the playwright and a character in the *Frogs*, that the role of school teachers for children is comparable with that of the poets for adults (*Frogs*, 1054-5). For substantiation of his arguments the author uses the *Frogs* as the key text:

> For us the *Frogs* dramatizes, as Plato's *Protagorus* was to do some years later, the emergence of a language of literary criticism and the emergence of the critic; as with the closely related satire of intellectual movement in the *Clouds*, Aristophanes no doubt had in mind in the *Frogs* real contemporary developments, and probably also comic predecessors, but the state of our evidence means that we will never be able to proceed beyond discerning the tantalizing traces of the outline of a history of the ideas which for us first surface in the *Frogs*. One of the aims of this book is to make some of those traces more visible…I have been concerned to show how themes and ideas constantly reappear over time and in different genres…Thus suggesting a more fruitful way of studying critical history, and to pay particular attention…antiquity's concern with what literature was for, what its uses were. It is a utilitarian view of literature and of 'literary criticism' which predominated in antiquity… (p. 2-8)

Criticism/assessment/evaluation as a process of weighing used sarcastically by Aristophanes is prefigured in Aeschylus' *Psydeostasia* where the souls of Achilles and Memmon are weighed against each other on Zeus' scale for assessment of their heroism. Thus weighing as an imagery for evaluation persists in Greek literature over time. But at

the same time the author is aware of the limitations of his studies that he undertakes here: "though I have tried throughout to call attention to the interplay between the practice and criticism of poetry, I am very conscious that this book is not the much-needed study of the mutual interchange between poetic imagery and ideas and the language of ancient criticism." (p. 8) Obviously the book does not intend to be a survey of classical critical theories but to highlight the ways literature was *used* by antiquity—more practical than aesthetical in its approach, and at the same time, the book also impresses that classical literature and classical interpretation, despite changes in intellectual and cultural contexts, matters for the contemporary readers.

The author states that the *'Frogs* has bequeathed to the critical tradition not just a way of talking poetic style, but also a critical language which uses sociopolitical distinctions to describe levels of style…" (p. 19) Later critics like Longinus and Dionysius of Halicarnassus have followed the guidelines of the text of Aristophanes—even of the Homeric epic to be "subjected to an endless process of integration, in which characters and their actions were precisely examined by the standards of 'realism' familiar to the audience…" (p. 21) The master architect of the Greek criticism Aristotle also follows the Aristophanic literary text in considering his principle of propriety or accuracy. "The *Frogs* is replete with literary 'problems' and problems in the making" that are thoroughly elaborated upon in the 1st chapter of the work concerned.

In the second chapter, the author studies the satyr play *Cyclops* by Euripides that dramatizes the Homeric episodes and reconstructs the oral myths in literature through an allusive practice that is a part of the hermeneutic skill in critical exercise: The *Cyclops* is a very striking instance of how later writers appropriate, and often, as in this case, literally 're-write' their predecessors by bringing out the modern structures which can be found there; as is well known, Euripides reads Homer in the light of some of the political and ethical interests of late fifth-century Athens…*Cyclops* is a text of the greatest interest for anyone concerned with how myths, and the texts which incorporate them, are made to work in, perhaps we might say to 'have meaning for' the time of their telling; as is well understood, myths often speak to the contemporary concerns, as well as the historical memory, of the communities which tell them." (p. 55)

One can compare the views of Professor Hunter with those of Professor Calame that we have just studied above. This is in fact the practical function of myth that both the authors have examined. Myth is a narrative that alludes to the history of a culture, and if mythopoea is, according to the modernist literary theorists, the primary function of literature, and myth is recreation or deconstruction of history, then both literature and history tend to be fictional—*mimesis* of the same reality though in different modes. Another common point in both the authors—poetics also functions as pragmatics in antiquity—"interplay between the practice and criticism of poetry" as Hunter says. In both the cases, if literature as myth is for contemporary concern, then its archetypal universality, symbolizing reality in general that philosophers, linguists and anthropologists have been arguing rigorously through the whole of the twentieth century would be null and void. It is certainly true that myths represent and are meant for a

particular culture primarily. But can its inter-cultural appropriation be only secondary outdating Frazer, Eliade, Cassirer, Jung and Frye altogether? Again why should the Greek myths be meaningful for the French or English? If they stand for the entire Occidental culture, then should we distinguish them from the whole of the Oriental horizon? But that way can we conceive of a holistic Oriental culture ignoring the differences between Chinese, Japanese Egyptian and Indian? If language and realism are the major criteria of cultural identity, then certainly we cannot think of a holistic culture. Regional myths cannot be universalized excepting only the motifs. Then, how to appreciate the literary culture of the 'other'?

But keeping aside all these issues, the reader of Hunter is highly impressed by his careful and intuitive correlation of creative literature with critical views that it generated subsequently. The critical perception of Aristophenes is transmitted later to the critics like Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Longinus and Plutarch. He traces the interplay of literary and social criticism (as noted earlier in Aristophanes) in Plutarch's remarks about comic vocabulary while studying the text "Comparison of Aristophanes and Menander" that reflects several familiar ancient narratives of cultural and literary history. In the fourth chapter the author deals with the Augustan critic Dionysius who writes on the practices of imitating the ancients. "We must not read the ancients," Dionysius of Halicarnassus writes, " superficially, expecting that benefit will come to us imperceptibly, but with principles to guide us, particularly if we wish to adorn our own *logos* with excellent features drawn from all of the ancients." (p. 109) Like the painter Zeuxis who collected integrated beauty from scattered bodies of naked girls, a poet should also collect the poets of charm from the works of ancient poets. The author comments that Dionysius reveals the idea that an interaction of Augustan poetry and Augustan criticism is necessary for a comprehensive critical view. Similarly, in the fifth chapter the author observes that Longinus' treatise *On the Sublime* is the most influential descendant of the *Frogs*. This chapter seems to be much better written than the earlier one in its dealing with the subject matter rather pinpointedly and coherently. This essay, no less than *Frogs*, Hunter states "reminds us again that the division between 'literature' and 'criticism' was not always simple or straightforward in antiquity. But his argument that "It is for this reason, if for no other, that the modern tendency to treat 'ancient literary criticism'" as a discrete area of ancient writing, to be studied in isolation from the literature which the ancient critics discussed, has done a disservice to our understanding of the way in which the ancients sought to explain and use creative art." (p. 168) does not seem to be accepted univocally. It is true that there have been "critical moments" in creative literature, but those moments manifest a critical taste of the contemporary society, not a theoretical assessment that a systematic criticism needs. At the same time we must agree with the author that critical views cannot be studied in isolation from literary texts although we cannot agree that literary texts are critical texts. Obviously Aristophanes is not a critic in the sense in which Aristotle is a critic. Longinus' style might be creative, but he is a critic, neither a poet nor a dramatist.

Deborah Weagel, *Women and Contemporary World Literature: Power, Fragmentation and Metaphor*. New York etc: Peter Lang, 2008, pp. 129. and *Words and Music: Camus, Beckett, Cage, Gould*. New York etc: Peter Lang, 2010, pp. 160.

Deborah Weagel introduces her 2009 publication "…this book provides a comparative study ranging from colonial New Spain to postcolonial Africa and India. It examines ways in which women in literature function within their particular cultural and circumstances to confront the challenge they encounter. With a focus on power, fragmentation and metaphor, it illustrates how some women in various countries throughout the world have exhibited resilience and power in the face of obstacles and vicissitudes." (p. 1)

Social Changes are due to two major factors—religion and politics, sometimes these two factors determining each other—religion structuring political principles and politics conditioning religious systems. Imperial powers have shaped diverse kinds of societies by their political ambitions and principles right from the very dawn of the Roman empire spreading over both the West and the East till the modern imperial establishment of the Western powers over the Eastern countries. This modern imperial conditions have been commonly known as colonial situations inevitably causing exploitation and social oppression. But the question is whether those situations can be homogenized. Critics like Gayatri Spivak answer the question in the positive whereas critics like Laura Christman differ—"in emphasizing ways in which imperialism homogenizes and generalizes others, there is a risk of overlooking the ways in which imperial and colonial discourses often deploy strategies of exaggerating and playing off differences among diverse others." Thus the different categories of different societies such as class, gender, location, race, caste and ideology cannot be counted under a single banner of "colonial rule" nor can there be a generalized postcolonial condition. Thus postcolonial culture cannot be homogeneous in both its structure and function. With this critical insight Weagel studies women characters in different cultures during a space of four centuries—from the 17th to the 20th putting them up in three major thematic frames such as power, fragmentation and metaphor.

The book contains six chapters portraying six women characters in different social contexts reacting to their conditions diversely as appropriate to differences in time and space: 1) Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz of the seventeenth century New Spain under the oppressive shadow of the Spanish Inquisition, 2) Ramatoula) Aissatou and Damem Salior in the French colonized West Africa, 3) Naseem in the postcolonial Pakistan, Jasmine and Dina Dalal of the postcolonial India. The dominating religious contexts are Hindu and Islam where traditional values are counted most. Thus Weagel, while studying six novels *A Room of One's Own* (Woolf), *So Long a Letter* (Marianna Ba), *The Dark Child* (Camara Laye), *Midnight's Children* (Salman Rushdie), *Jasmine* (Bharati Mukherjee) and *A Fine Balance* (Robinton Mistry) encounters women in world literature struggling not only for their survival, but also for exercising certain power and authority.

The author's interdisciplinary approach convinces the reader that literary study demands a wider arena of sensibility that correlates our experiences of modernity and

postmodern outlook. In her introduction to the book she provides sufficient clues for understanding the contents of the book. For example, she tells us that woman's struggle for power is due to man's domination in the binary structure of our social behaviour. Male is portrayed as one seamless unity, the whole (the colonizer, the artist, the physician, the husband etc.) whereas woman is fragmented. Jasmine's life represents a cultural fragmentation in India and America—fragmented, but interconnected— 'The divider between the whole and the parts becomes fragmented itself enabling the creation referred to by Homibhabha as the Third Space" which "constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity." Clearly, a Derridean perspective that Bhabha preaches: "the same sign can be appropriated, translated, re-historicized and read anew." Thus the binary polarity can be eroded and the subaltern (woman, colonized, the other) can finally be redeemed and reinstated as a whole in exercising its power—woman integrated with man, the oppressed with the oppressor, colonized with the colonizer, they with us so on and so forth. Bhabha's "Third Space" that erodes the binary division reminds one of the state of *Yuganaddha* or *advaya* in both the Buddhist and Hindu tantric philosophy that explains the state of liberation, *nirvana* or *moksa*, as transcending all sufferings due to our experience of the world of binary relationship.

The literary characters that Weagel studies struggle to overcome this binary experience by several means as appropriate for them. Peculiarly, the African woman chooses marriage in a polygamous family to achieve greater freedom. Jasmine's life represents a cultural fragmentation in India and America—fragmented, but interconnected—a third space. Picasso, the dominant male artist encounters the model, a dominated female in fragments, the modernist artist anticipates and prepares the way for the postmodernist/postcolonial novelist Rushdie exploring a woman in fragmentation struggling for integration. On the other hand, Mukherjee's woman is not physically disintegrated (as in Picasso and Rushdie), but culturally. Her quest is for a cultural whole—a "third space."

The metaphor that dominates the book under review is rather quilt than fragmentation, because the author aims at building a quilt of all the fragmentations that the characters represent. The "Third Space" is virtually a quilt —that unites the discrete binary polarities. Dina Dayal the protagonist of Mistry's novel, is literally a quiltmaker: "I present three mega-metaphors that can be associated with Dina's quiltmaking and her quilt: a woman's mind is a quilt, a quiltmaker is a builder, and a quiet is a text." (p. 5) Quilt is a sign of deconstruction as well—discrete patchworks reconstructed into a whole—the "Third Space" which is never 'organic' whole of structuralism, prone to further deference, reconstruction into another quilt and so on and so forth. Weagel's shrewd imagination gleans the characters and their cultural situations as patches and uses them as textures for her book which is a quilt itself. Dina Dayal and Deborah Weagel represent each other metaphorically creating a quilt-text where fiction and criticism rival each other—an admirable effort indeed.

The second book by Weagel is self-defined: it studies two phenomena—*music in literature* and *literature and music* as they are not identical but analogous. Out of the

seven chapters of the book the first two are devoted to the study of music in Albert Camus' novel *The Stranger*, the next two chapters to Samuel Beckett's play *Waiting for Godot,* the fifth one to John Cage's musical compositions and the last two chapters to the performing musician Glenn Gould. Camus is a modernist, Beckett sharing both modernism and postmodernism, Cage a postmodernist and Gould representing both postmodernism and romanticism. The author writes: "This book delves into some of the specific ways these four power houses of the twentieth century moved beyond the boundaries of tradition and help to redefine our perception and understanding of words and music in contemporary society…Camus incorporated musical terms and structures in some of his writing, Beckett treated words and pauses in a musical manner in some of his plays, Cage also experimented with silences and rests in his work and created innovative scores that involved words and music and allowed musicians beway in performance; and in his radio documentaries Gould created complex contrapuntal musical textures with a mélange of words, music and sounds." (p. 8)

Thus the choice of the creative characters in the book is founded on an aesthetic logic: "These men were some of the most innovative, creative and thought-provoking artists of their time, and their contributions continue to illuminate our path as we move forward in the twenty-first century." (*ibid*.)

The author herself is a musician and combines in herself a literary critic with musical performance and criticism. Therefore she is qualified enough to comment on the musical aspects of Camus' novel such as the contrasting function of the images of the sun and sea reflecting Camus' personal struggle in exploring his identity amidst the situations that eroded his ontological security. In Camus' novel the dominating imagery of the sun and sea function as mutually complementary heroes of nature. At the same time their contrast can also be affiliated with a time/dominant type of musical relationship—the suntonic and the sea dominant. (pp. 20ff.) The detailed analysis of the phenomenon the author offers convinces the reader of her ability for the interdisciplinary probe into the matter she handles with sincerity and seriousness.

Similarly, Weagel analyses Beckett's *Godot* from its musico-literary perspective: "The musical threads that Beckett wears into *Godot* includes indications for dynamics similar to those found in a musical score." (pp. 54ff.) While studying Cage and Beckett in a complementary perspective she writes that "silence" was explored and redefined by these two great artists demonstrating that silence is not really silent. Silence is a positive and productive space, not simply a negative void. Pauses and rest in the theatre and music, words and notes gain equal status in their semantic levels. Weagel applies Heinrich Schenker's theory of hierarchical levels to interpret Beckett's play and Cage's music *4'33"*, and suggests that whereas Beckett's play with its structured use of silence ends itself to a theoretical analysis, the freer nature of Cage's music does not do so. Her thorough analysis of the point with scales of notes illustrates her technical skill in appreciating the artists and justifying her arguments.

The aouthor admires the pianist Gould for his interpretations of composers like Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, Haydn, Brahms and Schoenberg, and for his performance in

the Canadian radio and television documentaries that covered a very wide range of topics. In the sixth chapter of the book she compares and contrasts Gould's unedited performances with the edited ones—that include the integration and layering of both words and music with a suggestion that "Gould's radio documentaries represent some of his most significant contributions to twentieth-century artistic production." (p. 109ff.) While writing on the musical and verbal counterpoint in Gould, the author admits that there are certain limitations to the analogy of music and verbal counterpoint. By way of referring to Eric Prieto she agrees that literature uses words, not tones; hence literal transfer between the two genres of art is not possible. Therefore, mutual applications of concepts is an inherently metaphorical act. (p. 138ff.) Musical semantics differs from verbal semantics. In music modulations of sounds create meaning, notes determining their structure. There can be music without words, so also excepting songs and opera, literary genres are meaningful without music, and, of course theatrical performance combines literature with music for generating a complete semantic reality. The only way of tracing music in literature is to find analogical imagery in a narrative structure that function musically as in the case of Camus' novel. Weagel's success lies in her unprejudiced analysis of both the phenomena that she deals with in this book—"music in literature," and the scope and limits of the analogy of "music and literature."

Mithilesh Chaturvedi (Ed.) *Bhartrhari: Language, Thought and Reality*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidas, 2009, pp. 615.

The present book publishes the proceedings of the International Seminars held on the title subject in 2003 under the auspices of the publishers memorizing centenary of their publication programme that they began in the British Indian city of Lahore in 1903.

The present volume contains twenty-six chapters contributed by different authors including Bhartrhari's works with a special reference to the aspects of *Vâkyapadiya* and a comprehensive (if not exhaustive) bibliography on Bhartrhari—different editions of his works in both original Sanskrit and (English) translations.

Bhartrhari founded the philosophical/theoretical treatment of Sanskrit grammar, otherwise called the *Siddhânta* School, drawing upon metaphysics, epistemology, logic and ritual that contributed to both linguistics and philosophy of language followed by the grammarians like Bhattoji, Dikshita, Kaunda Bhatta and Nâgesa Bhatta.

Bhartrhari follows the mainstream grammarians Pânini and Patanjali in considering the divine origin of language as a whole, and its subsequent phenomenal metamorphosis used by man for communication of emotions and feelings and conveying information. Language is the full-fledged and sophisticated medium of social behaviour and improvement over gestures and postures as the communicative media. Pânini holds the first fourteen aphorisms of his treatise (in eight chapters) as communicated to him directly by Lord Siva the archetypal preacher of all the branches of knowledge; and Patañjali invokes five Vedic stanzas for justifying the sacred origin of language. Following them Bhartrhari also studies both the sacred and profane aspects of language in general and of Sanskrit in particular. But the central question is whether the grammatical rules are discerned indirectly from the use of the learned speakers or are deduced from the very

sacred pattern of the language—the *vâk*. If grammar is use-based, then its relevance is to be counted only in the profane level, otherwise the sacred level is beyond any bondage of grammar. This is what exactly is in the mind of our grammarians who use the Sanskrit word *vyâkarana* for grammar that literally means morphologization (vi-â-karana) which also means a kind of distortion (*vikâra*) of the Reality or Truth. This is why the Buddhists (followed by Sankara) hold that Reality is trans-linguistic. This view of language is clearly a profane view. The sacred view of the grammarians plead for a trans-phenomenal level of language which is itself Reality which assumes various forms in course of its descendance into the profane level—*martyam âvivesa*. The Rgvedic stanza that Patañjali invokes suggests a historical evolution of language, particularly of Sanskrit from its proto level. The researches of the comparative philologists have explored the pre-historical status of the Indo-European language as a whole. The language-bull of the Rgveda that descended like a shower of rain (*vrsabha* means both a bull and a shower of rain in Patañjali) had already had four horns, three legs, two heads, seven hands, been bound in three-wise referring to as, Patañjali understands, the divine origin of linguistic structure such as four parts of speech (nouns, verbs, prefixes, particles), three times or tenses (past, present, future), two kinds of words (eternal, produced), seven declensions respectively. The three-wise tie of language refers to its association with the three places of the human body —heart, throat and head—causing externalization of language in a sequence (*RV* IV.58.3). Patañjali also refers to other stanzas of *RV* such as VIII.6.9.12, I.164.45, X.71.4 and X.71.2 that suggest the morphology, categories, function and physical production of language. The seven rivers represent the seven declensions produced by tongue's striking the palate; and language reveals itself as a wife strips herself for the enjoyment of her husband.

Although Pânini does not name the language of which he formulates grammatical rules, his "Mâhesvara" *sûtras* clearly suggest that he believes in the divine origin of language which Patañjali articulates by citing different Vedic stanzas while explaining the nature and function of the language he deals with. Moreover, he clarifies unambiguously that it is the language of the elite Brahmins of the *ârya* race that, both Pânini and himself. More interestingly concerns, he states that in some other countries such as Kamboja, East, Middle-East and Middle North people use words common in the *ârya bhâsâ*, but in different senses. In that case the *âryans* must use them as they are used in the Vedas as well as by the *ârya Brahmins* who are the authorities in use. Grammar is therefore a guide in setting the rules for such *âryan* uses. What is still more important to note is the point that Patañjali compares the rules of grammar with those of the Vedic sacrificial rituals and codes of the Brahminic conducts in the sphere of âryan household and society. Reform of regulations in religious rituals is, for Patañjali, the ideal regulations in linguistic use.

The injunctions in the Vedic rituals and the âryan social conduct are exemplary for the injunctions in the linguistic use so that an *ârya* should retain the sanctioning of both for attaining merit in his life that leads one to the ultimate happiness in the divine world. Language spoken by the *âryans* has a common source but distinguishes itself by purifying the system of its formation and use.

As a Vedic ritualist, Patañjali is a pluralist in religion and philosophy, not a monotheist or monist anticipating the later development of Vedanta by Sankara. Like Pânini, he is a descriptive linguist. His idea of merit or *dharma* is the same as that of Mimâmsâ and his idea of attaining ultimate well-being by studying grammar and connective language is the same as that of the Mimâmsâ notion attaining the highest delight (*priti*) by performing sacrifices with correct use of the Vedic mantras. Any imposition of the monist ideas such as search for an essence of language as done by the later theists since Bhartrhari is absolutely anachronic. Bhart[hari's quest for a linguistic essence (*Sabdabrahma*) may be compared to the eidetic phenomenology of Edmund Husserl, which, in Halenstein's words is "concerned with the grasp of the essential features common to objects of the same category". It is for this of language than a grammarian of the descriptive school founded by Pânini and developed by Patañjali.

In his keynote essay V.N. Jha wisely warn's that in interpreting Bhartrhari a scholar should not be over-ambitious in a parallel between him and the contemporary linguists and philosopher of language (p. xxiii). Johannes Bronkhorst has put up much of his imagery in ascertaining the Vedic tradition of Bhartrhari, a quest, which, he thinks must shed the necessary light on the metaphysical aspect of Bhartrhari's linguistic monism and its sacred perspectives. He tries to ascertain a particular Vedic tradition or school (*sâkhâ*) to which Bhartrhari was affiliated and therefore considers it as the authority (or âgama) for his metaphysics of language. His meticulous studies conclude that Bhartrhari takes both the ritualistic principles of the Brahmins and the speculation thoughts of the upanicads into account the Maitraniya tradition. On the contrary, as Candona says, neither Pânini, nor Patañjali is affiliated to any particular *sâkhâ* in presenting grammar as a part of Vedic studies (Vedânga). Cardona's reference to Helârâja's comment on Bhartrhari treats of *âgama* as the tradition of the grammarians makes much more sense than Bronkhorst's churning the ocean of Upanisadic texts for interpreting this term. Candona is also correct to note that Patañjali stresses the descriptive function of grammar rather than search for the ontology of language—whether language is an eternal entity, the absolute reality not reduced by the human speaker—as done by Bhartrhari. No Vedantic perspective can be read into him, as Dasgupta correctly observes, Nâgesa sometimes does. Even Bhartrhari is not a monist Vedantin as Iyer has elaborately propounded. In fact he is a Kaula tantric non-dualist, parallel to the Vajrayana view of the Reality as Yuganaddha or Mahâmudrâ. His Buddhist link is rightly traced by Helârâja. It seems, none of the contributors to this volume is aware of this perspective.

Navjivan Rastogi contributes an insightful and scholarly chapter—on Abhinava's elucidation of Bhart[hari: "he develops hints and insights which were in incipient stage in BH or were only suggested therein. Here we have a creation of full-bodied religious language, depicting reality as constituted by the sacred language (*mantra sarira* or *úabdarâsi*) and its essence as *mantra* or *sabdana*…." P. 326 (The sentence is rather awkwardly long crying for editing.)

This sacred aspect of language is rather pitiably missed by the Westernized scholars like Bimal Krishna Matilal, who interprets *sabdana* as a profane function of

languaging and thankfully accepted by Tandra Patnaik. Ramesh Pradhan and Tandra Patnaik study Bhartrhari along with the contemporary Western philosophers of language. Pradhan observes that Bhartrhari is an anti-contextualist and anti-intentionalist turn: Meaning is *akhana*, and it cannot change from content to content, and is independent of the speaker's intention. But Pradhan should have noted that this stand of Bhartrhari is founded on the sacred aspect of language, a stand taken by both Pânini and Patañjali. Further, this stand cannot also be compared with Heidegger's that "language speaks, not man", because Heidegger too treats language in its profane aspect, and for that matter, all the philosophers and linguists of the contemporary Western world treat language that way. Donaldson's interpretation theory invokes the role of belief in understanding the speaker—the structures of thoughts and sentences are interdependent. But Bhartrhari is uncompromising about the independence of the linguistic structure that constructs thoughts. One should always remember the self-revelation theory of language suggested by the Ru stanza quoted above by Patañjali: Language reveals itself to its chosen hearer (as the wife strips herself to her husband)—no question of interpretation, it is straight communication or no communication.

There are two chapters on grammatical topics: Arindam Chakraborty writes on the philosophy of case-endings, and Vincenzo Vengiani on the genitive absolute (œeca relationship), the latter being a very careful and meticulous study of the subject. Sesa relationships cannot be clarified as a *kârakas* because they do not satisfy either the semantic or the formal conditions laid down by Pânini for assigning *kâraka* designation. According to Pânini, the cases, where the six kinds of syntactic relationship cannot be formed (i.e., the remaining—*sesa* cases) take up genitive relationship. This rule allows almost a limitless use of genitive cases for various reasons, particularly to avoid the complicacies in determining the case in question—the rule allows an excellent morphological flexibility without any semantic loss. Bhartrhari's view is that *sesa* is indeed a *kâraka*, but only informal, i.e., whereas the *kâraka* relation is strictly formalized, the sesa relation is not. Bhartrhari discerns two kinds of *sesa* relationship—noun-noun and noun-verb. Pânini's rule, that all that remains (*sesa*) without any formal *kâraka* relations can be put into genitive, exhibits a tremendous descriptive ability as also the vast area of linguistic use he deals with. The present chapter is extremely valuable for the students of grammar and applied linguistics.

Tola and Drogonelti write a fine chapter on the gender in Bhartrhari. Houben assesses Bhartrhari as a cognitive linguist. The whole volume is an exemplary one in representing Bhartrhari in the contemporary context.

Nrusingha Charan Panda, *Bhagavad Gita: A New Exposition in a Broader Spectrum*, Delhi: D.K. Printworld (P) Ltd., 2009, pp XV + 587

The author offers a stanza-wise commentary of the *Bhagavadgita* claiming that it has some special characteristics. "The present exposition", he writes, "on the *Bhagavadgita* is an updated one on the basis of modern thoughts in general and newer scientific discoveries in particular. As the title indicates, interpretation has been done in a newer vision in a broader spectrum". (p.X) Although the modifiers "newer" and "broader"

are not defined precisely, it appears that by "broader" he means non-sectarian, i.e., without any ideological — religious, philosophical, social or cultural — bias as several other such commentaries have been – the ones by, for example, all the religious leaders right from Sankara till date, and the social leaders like Gandhi, Tilak, Vinobha, or even the thinkers like Aurobindo who have tried to draw upon this seminal text for underpinning their own ideas they have developed independently or to accommodate the ideas of this text into their own systems of thought. By "newer", he means the scientific ideas in biology, physics, astrophysics and other such natural sciences that have threatened the foundations of the religious traditions represented by the *Gita*. In other words, he means an objective scientific point of view although, he confesses, there is no view with an absolute objectivity. However, he frequently refers to the principles of natural sciences in explaining the philosophical concepts otherwise considered religious dogmas.

Philosophers of great eminence such as Surendranath Dasgupta have already observed that the *Gita* was composed by the Vaisnavas of the Ekanti group during the 1st c. B.C., and later on interpolated to the *Mahabharata* composed during the 2nd c. B.C. The Ekanti Vaishnavas belong to the Bhagavata School otherwise called *satvatas* who worshipped only Krsna-Vasudeva out of the four heroes of the Vrsni genealogy such as Sankarsana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha. For worshipping only one (*eka*) as the ultimate end (*anta*) of the Reality as a whole these Vaishnavas are called Ekantins. The present reviewer has studied this phenomenon in detail in his 2010 publication on the leading advocate of the Bhagavata cult — Sridhara Svami. The author of the book under review, however, does not accept this dating of the *Gita* which, he believes, was written as a portion of the original *Mahabharata* composed during the pre-Buddhist era, i.e., prior to the 6th c. B.C. because of the fact that neither the epic, nor this portion of this text, refer in anyway to the events of the Buddhist culture as a whole. Nor does he offer any specific account of the divine character of the singer/ speaker of the text Krsna-Vasudeva—whether a mythical or a historical character. Unlike Aurobindo who believes in his historicity, Panda would prefer to call him pre-historic and his song, the *Gita* is mostly of a symbolic order that transgresses the limitations of time and space of any culture, past and present. The prescriptions and proscriptions of the Indian sages were based on "Vedic and Vedantic ethics, humanitarianism, altruism and centred around a metaphysics of one formless, all-pervasive God without the dichotomy of subject and object." (p.15) In the author's view, Arjuna's state of dejection is only natural to all men irrespective of differences in language and religion, or, for that matter, differences in any cultural criteria. This view is of course not a new one, as several thinkers have already considered the message of the text universal in appeal.

One of the new interpretations may be considered. In IV. 13 Krsna as the Almighty claims to be the creator of the four castes according to the inborn qualities and division of labour (*karma vibhaga*). But the author reads *vibhaga* not as "division". He translates the stanza: "Types of persons in conformity with their Innate Nature Resulting from their works done in their past lives." Translation of *guna* as innate nature may be appropriate, but translation of *karma vibhaga* as the works done in the past lives seems to be a self-imposition because there is no reference to the past lives. The author is free to interpret

castes as "types" rejecting the Brahmanic caste division into four categories Brahmana (priestly class), Ksatriya (warrior class), Vaisya (business and cultivators' community) and Sudra (community of servants in general). He observes that "The Sanskrit word for "caste" is *jati*, and for colour is *varna*. Each one of the four castes of the Hindus has not a specific colour. Moreover, God, one and only one for the whole universe, has not created all the religions of the world. Caste-system among the Hindus was a social evolution in the prevailing circumstances of the ancient age. In the present social context it has become obsolete though still extant, being propped by political interest and group interest. The word *varna* literally means "shades of colour" and contextually means "types" (p.134). Thus the author interprets, the caste system basically refers to the categories due to the psycho-biological innate nature of beings in the world — not only human beings, even all kinds of creatures such as gods, demons, animals, birds, trees and creepers. The *Brhadaranyaka* (I.4.II) is an authority in this regard following which there is another Sanskrit stanza quoted by Jagadishwarananda in his edition of the Sridhara commentary on the *Gita*. The author restricts the meaning of *varna* to shed of colours. But Amara Simha (2.7.1) refers to several senses "progeny" being the major referent and "caturvarnya" referring to the four castes by birth. Again, the author warns that this stanza should not be correlated with the "Purusasukta" (Rg Veda 8.10.90) which all the orthodox commentators on the *Gita* – from Sankara to Madhusudana through Sridhara have done. Admitting that *varna* means psycho-biological "types" the question of taxonomical method remains problematic, i.e., whether founded on action or on birth. Even if following the author one agrees that *karmavibhaga* is due to the actions of the past lives, the question of *samskara*, then the continuity of the caste remains birth-bound from time immemorial, say, following the author, pre-historical as is the appearance of Krsna and existence of the divinity. Therefore the Vedic religion, founded on two pillars – sacrificial rituals and castism, i.e., *varna* by birth cannot support any self-contradiction that the author commits by saying that the Vedic caste division is obsolete although still extant. How can a system be both obsolete and still extant? One is free to consider caste system sociologically with a historical foundation. But a kind of system the pre-historical divinity speaks of must be correlated with the Krsna's version, must be correlated with the Vedic statement that supports the caste system by birth. *Guna* means the qualities expressed in action as ordained by the three strands of phenomenal reality – sattva, rajas and tamas – that are beginningless and endless. In the Vedic rituals priests were not chosen from people at random but by the mark of their generation, i.e., from people whose forefathers were also performing these rituals. Thus, according to the Vedas as well as the *Gita* which is also pro-Vedic, an *Upanisad* sung by Krsna, the divinity (not by rsis), human taxonomy, i.e., categorization into types is based on action determined by the permutation and combination of the constituents (*guna*) or strands of Prakriti. Thus *guna* and *karma* are necessarily correlated in determining simultaneously the relation as a whole and its individual types in particular. The other name of this creation is *jati* meaning both birth and type. The psycho-biological birth is itself a type. It depends upon the thinker how could he extend and interpret this system without violating the basic principles guiding them. This Vedic system of religion and its corollary

philosophy has been degenerating long since the fall of classical age in the 10th century, since the advent of Islam reaching its climax currently due to the globalizing economy and its corollary materialist model of human life, and therefore, it is extremely risky to accommodate the message of the *Gita* in an age that interprets liberation strictly in terms of material prosperity.

The author repeatedly tries to extend the issue of castism as a human category according to the modes of combination of the three constituents (*guna*) of nature that determine the human nature as an inborn character (*svabhava*). Not only in the context of the Vedic religion also this type of castism is traced in all other religions. He therefore comments (p.396): "It may be mentioned here that brahmanas exist in all religions, societies, geographical locations and ages. They will continue to exist so long as the human species is not extinct. But the present caste system in Hindu society based on one's birth in a certain family, shall and should dwindle away." If it is simply a natural phenomenon, then why should the author use the imperative modal "should"? Imposition of any personal impression or wish damages the judgment founded, as the author proposes, purely on psycho-biological factors. Of course he successfully manages to interpret the stanzas 41-44 of the Chapter 18, but strangely avoids the issue as dealt with in the stanzas 32-33 of the Chapter 9 where Krsna arguably refers to the inferiority of women, *vaisyas* and *sudras* debarred from performances of the Vedic sacrificial rituals—signified by the conditionals *kim punah*. Krsna, the representative deity of Bhagavata cult, is nonetheless a patron of the Vedic religion. His song is meaningful precisely in the context of the two religions and societies. Contextuality of a discourse is rejected only at the cost of damaging it severely. One must remember that Krsna sings the sermon of *bhakti* primarily in the context of the Vedic religion that he patronizes. The author mistranslates these two stanzas—maybe intentionally omitting altogether the mention of women, etc. What Krsna advocates committedly is not any complexion-based racism or gender complex, but maintenance of psycho-biological purity necessary for the continuity of the Indian culture founded on the Vedic religion. As a recent scholar Ali Rattansi (*Racism*, Oxford University Press, 2007, p.19) wisely observes, with a reference to the contemporary serious historians, complexion-based racism "often attributed to early India has little foundation in historical reality" for the obvious reasons that the key figures of the *Mahabharata* (including the *Gita*) such as the author Vyasa and the leading character of the epic Krsna, both are of dark complexion.

The author's probing insight and courageous grip of the intricate issues, irrespective of the controversial challenge, are of great admiration as they deserve our serious attention for diving deep into the subject concerned.

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